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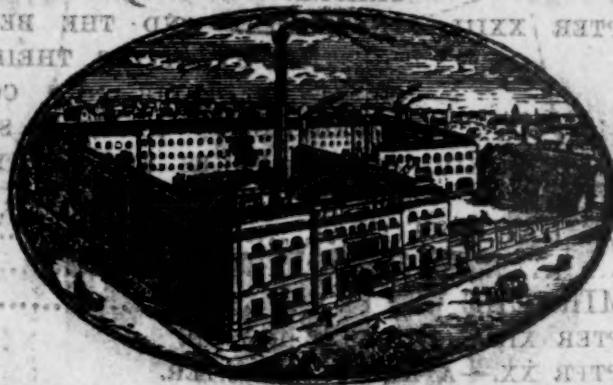
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# THE SIXPENNY MAGAZINE

MAY 1, 1867.

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## THE PRISONER:

A STORY OF ROMANTIC LOYALTY IN THE REIGN OF LOUIS XIV.

BY WILLIAM ISAAC KEAY.

## CHAPTER XVII.

MOTHERLESS.—AN OLD LOVE REVIVED.

THE Count de Raymond\* was sitting in his cell. His elbow leaned upon his knee, and his head leaned upon his hand; he was thinking, and his thoughts were of much importance, not only as affecting the projects of his companions in the conspiracy, but as having an influence upon the King's destiny, and yet, no doubt, his Majesty then laughed with the nobles, or made merry with the ladies of the court, unaware that a sword hung over his head, and that the question whether or not it should be allowed to fall on him, was being argued in the mind, and depended upon the decision, of one man, whom he thought his enemy.

The momentous reflections about the conspiracy were only the final settling of a doubt which had all along haunted the Prisoner's mind; and the doubt was, the propriety of such a conspiracy under any circumstances. The progress of his thoughts on that subject, and the various changes and modifications may be given as follows:—

In his calmer moments he had never regarded it with satisfaction. First of all, as a means of gaining liberty, he had grasped at anything—as who would not? Then, after he had contrived to gain temporary freedom without the Conspirators' aid—unless, indeed, we take into account the spurious fetters, for which he had to thank the Abbé—he felt, for some days,

\* We shall still call him Count, as by that title the Abbé had introduced him to the Conspirators; although his father, by Madame de Raymond's confession, being yet alive, he could have no claim to that designation: nor indeed, as a prisoner, could he legally have succeeded if it even had the old Count been dead.

as if he had no right to consult his own inclinations in the matter, as he conceived himself bound in honour to act up to his first promise, and to join in the plot, whatever it might be. Such was his state of mind when, during his first private interview with the Abbé, at the Cabaret Saint Antoin, that crafty priest so worked upon his passions by a description of his father's wrongs—of which the Count was ignorant, as they happened during his own confinement—as also a cunning allusion to his own persecutions, that he gave an apparently hearty consent to the whole plot, even to the death of the King. His calmer thoughts afterwards condemned him for giving that consent; and yet, as the only way of gaining permanent liberty, he did not withdraw it: more especially as he could easily perceive the Abbé was not a man to be trifled with, and that he would take care to punish him if he proved unfaithful. His desire to find some honourable way of attaining liberty, was the cause of his disguised visit to his mother. The same wish was the origin of his forced interview with the King, in the character of the Sorcerer, when he begged for his freedom so eloquently: he was anxious to obtain liberty; but he was also desirous to save the King's life. When he came out from his majesty that night, his feelings had certainly undergone a change; then he would have conspired with the most wicked of them, and have slain his sovereign with his own hand—for his passions were very fierce—but how sudden had been their cooling when those words were read by him, which seemed to fall down from Heaven into his hands—words from the neglected Scriptures of God; the sound of





them came into his ears as he lay in his bed—"Curse not the King: no, not in thy most secret imaginings!"

The result of his mature deliberation was, that he resolved, if possible, to defeat the conspiracy; at the same time he deemed himself bound in honour to do so without danger to those chiefly engaged in it, if such were found at all practicable, seeing that, whatever were their motives, they certainly had befriended him. How this was to be managed, must be matter for further consideration. This resolution once made, rather altered the complexion of the Count's future prospects. Certainly, if he could succeed in preventing the plot in such a manner as to let the king know of his instrumentality in the prevention, he might hope for freedom through the royal pardon; but if he prevented it without his Majesty being acquainted with his part in the transaction, he might return to prison again as soon as he chose; for he was well aware that he could not escape from France by his own exertions: that idea was absurd and hopeless.

Under these circumstances, not knowing but in a few days he might be a prisoner, he resolved to break one of his promises to the Abbé, and to seek an interview with his mother. The evening was now well advanced, so he rose up, laid aside his chain and ball, and left the prison.

With all convenient haste he sped on, nor stopped till he stood before the Hotel de Raymond. The door was open and he rushed in, but was interrupted by servants who told him that Madame could see no one; that she was dying, and a priest was with her. They little suspected who he was, or what darts they thrust into his bosom by the news they communicated. And he made them no wiser; he stopped not to exclaim, nor rend his hair, or show any outward sign of grief, but strode into the Countess's chamber. Opening the door, he was arrested

by the sight of his dying parent listening attentively to the prayers of her confessor. No one took any notice of him. His mother looked vacantly at him; and the priest turned away his eyes the moment they encountered his figure, and continued his devotions. When these were concluded, he turned to the visitor and mildly inquired the cause of his unreasonable intrusion.

"Priest," said the Count, "I come to give comfort, perhaps as valuable as yours; not that I mean to disparage your efforts: they are worthy, no doubt; but I come to tell the Countess about her son Pierre."

At the name, the patient seemed to gather strength. She rose up, seized hold of the stranger by way of welcome to one who knew something of her son, and shrieked out—"What of him?—is he free?"

"He has not yet got liberty permanently; but he has so escaped from prison at present, that he will be able to see you."

"Let him come quickly then. Go! haste! call him! I will live till he come! but it must not be long."

"Bring more lights," called the Count. His voice was clear and loud, and was easily heard through the door which he had left open behind him when he came in. His order was obeyed; a moment or two after, a servant entered with two lamps. The Count placed them so as to reveal his own features, and stooping down, said to the Countess, who was gazing attentively at him—

"Do you not know me?"

The answer was a quick extending of the arms on the part of the mother, which was warmly responded to by the son.

Neither spoke a word for some moments. The silence was at length broken by the Countess, who, suddenly remembering the dangerous position in which she believed her son to stand, said somewhat hurriedly—

"You are safe, then? But you have done no treason?"



How glad he was that with truth he could answer "No."

"You are aware, my son, that there are treasons abroad, but you must not join in them. You have liberty at present, use it well, and—I am very weak, and cannot speak much; but the good father will direct you how to proceed. You must *not* let them kill the King!"

"Mother," said the Count. He stopped a moment; he had not said that word for so long a time, it seemed strange to his own ears. "Mother," said he, "you don't surely know that, without the King's death, there can be no liberty for me. It is only a stolen pardon I enjoy at present, but the King does not know it; if he did, I should soon be in prison again, more hopeless than ever—unless, indeed, I could manage to escape from France altogether; and that seems to me improbable."

"Your trials, my poor Pierre, are many and painful; but still, let not the devil tempt you to commit sin even to advantage yourself. Serve the King, my son, and put your trust in God. He will always bless you in the discharge of duty, if not in this world, at least he will do so abundantly in the next."

Madame de Raymond's utterance grew somewhat indistinct. The excitement naturally attendant on having her last wish so unexpectedly gratified, in beholding her son, had considerably hastened the expiry of her feeble lamp. She soon lost the power of distinguishing the faces that bent over her. She stretched out her hand and took hold of Pierre's; and pressing it affectionately, she murmured brokenly:—"God bless you—my son—I know he will—Father, pray for me—watch over him—Pierre, serve the King!" And she died.

Short interview and sad! to see, but to learn that we can see no more; to meet, but for the purpose of parting! The Count felt it deeply. As he knelt by the bed, still holding the hand of that clay which he had once called his

mother, his head was bent down so as to hide his face; for his grief was very great. The old monk looked on with a sad, sympathising countenance, like one who had felt much sorrow and knew what it was. He evidently felt for that son who was paying his last filial tribute; nor did he scorn to let his fellow feeling find vent. He laid his hand quietly on the Count's head—just as he would have tried to comfort a child; and the tears flowed apace from his aged eyes; they fell upon the mourner's neck, warm and sincere; he looked up, and began to feel comfort.

"My son," and he spoke very kindly, "God hath indeed afflicted thee, though, perhaps, not so heavily as at first might seem. Thy aged mother was weary, as one who longed to rest after a toilsome journey; and it hath pleased her Heavenly Father that she should lie down in peace. He hath graciously taken her to himself. These tears are such as none need be ashamed to shed for a mother, much less need you, for yours. While thou bearest about this grief—and I would not have thee bury it—let it be as an holy oil to soften and smooth down the rougher passions, and let its memory make thy life more pure. Let that Saviour who was her confidence be also thy hope, striving so to live that thou mayest be re-united to her when this life is over. Yea, let thy deeds so shine with the pure lustre of virtue, as never to disgrace her memory. I trust I need not remind you of her last injunction—your duty to the King. Of your circumstances I know little but what you have yourself told me. I understand you cannot have security unless you join some nefarious plot against the Government—nay, it is hinted, against the King himself. I charge you, my son—and when I do so I but repeat your parent's dying words—remember it is God who placed you under subjection to a certain government. He knew what was best for you; and He made Louis XIV. your King. Do



not, then, rashly question His wisdom by any act of rebellion. His providence may be sometimes dark, and wonderfully mysterious : but the light shall yet come forth— if not in this transitory existence, at least when it is over—and you shall then be shown so perfect a view of God's dealings with you, that you shall be constrained to adopt the language of an ancient Israelite, and say, 'Verily, it was for my good that I felt afflictions.' But arise, my son. You said, I remember, that his Majesty knew not you were out of prison, by which I understand you have probably contrived to bribe your gaoler. I do not wish to know the circumstances. But it is evident that, if you tarry long, they may discover you, and so prevent you from enjoying a like privilege in future. I shall endeavour myself to have an audience of the King, and see if he will not grant your pardon. Methinks if it were a great political offence, indeed, that would not be sufficiently punished by your term of imprisonment; you may rely upon my best efforts. In the meantime, remember a mother's last injunction. When the soul is just quitting the body, and is, as I were, half into the next world, more of truth is seen and known than mere mortal vision usually discerns; and hence the mind of God is spoken by the lips of dying Christians. So I adjure you by this sacred emblem—here he raised a cross, and solemnly presented it for the Count to kiss—to remember her last command—'Serve the King.'

The monk raised his hands over the form of the still kneeling Count in a parting benediction, and withdrew, leaving M. de Raymond alone with the dead.

He rose up slowly, gave a sigh in the heaviness of his spirit, and was about to move away, when his eye was attracted by an open box containing papers; it stood near the bed, and part of the contents seemed to have been looked at lately, as they were lying beside the box, but not in it. M. de Ray-

mond took them up, and discovered how much he must have occupied his mother's heart, when she had spent some of her last hours in examining some letters on which his name was superscribed. Why did he start, as if he knew the writing? Wherefore did he so hastily look for the name of the writer? And for what reason did he seem so affected by contending emotions?

The answer is simple, yet strange. On that melancholy day from which dated all his misfortunes, in the forest where he overheard the plotting of king and priest, he had been reading a letter from his lady-love. And till now he had quite forgotten her. For a short time after he was put in prison, he thought of her sometimes. But why think at all of outer-world things, he who had no hope of seeing it again? So he gradually thought of her more and more faintly; his last thoughts of her had been as of one married or dead; and then—he left off thinking. Since he had regained his temporary freedom, he had not recalled her to his memory, till the old affection was all at once revived by seeing the old familiar handwriting.

Perhaps some one will ask, "Can love, then, last for nineteen years?" I cannot say. Let me go on with the history.

The Count resolved, if he could find her alive, to see her once more, whose name was attached to those letters. The name was Lucille de la Guise.

#### CHAPTER XVIII.

LUCILLE: THE WEB OF HER LIFE, AND HOW IT ENTANGLED OTHERS.

SHE was young; she was fair; she was good. While yet the Count was an honoured soldier, nay, a favoured officer, of the King, her fair image was the object of his heart's devotion, to obtain her hand was his chief earthly aim, the centre of his hopes in this world. He had known Lucille since the time of his boyhood; they had sported together; and among the



pastimes had been the game of knights rescuing ladies in peril.

As a child, she was considered bold and determined; but those about her thought she possessed but little affection. But before she grew up they were convinced of their mistake. There was a plaything or a playmate—whichever you like—that was a favourite companion of her early days, it was a spaniel that her father had got from some foreign country. The youthful heiress liked to play with it; so at length it was wholly given up to her, and was looked upon as hers. They ran about together; they gambolled in the galleries and gloomy passages of her father's chateau; they sported together in the sunny summer days in the fields and meadows; when fatigued with their rambles they grew weary, they might be found on the smoothy lawn, resting together, the dog and the child.

One evening she was absent from the chateau till a later hour than usual; and though the length of time occupied by her rambles was not very well defined, her attendants began to be uneasy at her protracted stay, and instituted a search for her over the castle-grounds. She was found on a grassy bank, at no great distance, weeping over her canine favourite; for an ill-directed bullet from one of her father's foresters had been the means of its death; and they found the child by the dead body of the spaniel, shedding tears profusely, the first proof she had given of deep affection or attachment for any creature. But they did not find her alone; a noble boy was stooping beside her. He lived not far off, and was now and then a companion of Lucille's sports. On this occasion he was trying to console her, but with little success. It was, perhaps, her first grief, but an early presage of her after-life, filled as it was with protracted sorrow; for that noble boy was destined to be afterwards her constant playmate, in due time likewise her accepted suitor; and he is the hero of this story.

Let us behold her when she had numbered seventeen years—when the young de Raymond had asked her the momentous question, when he knew and rejoiced that he could call her his own. Her figure was lithe and graceful; not too light as a fairy ideal, nor so substantial as to be too terrestrial, but just a happy medium. Her features were not faultlessly regular; but the charm of her face was in the smile which rivetted the attention of the beholder, and thus prevented criticism. Her eye, however, was a feature that the physiognomist would have loved to dwell on; it was soft, yet brilliant; an eye that could laugh with the joyous or weep with the afflicted; though there did seem a strong predisposition to the mirthful under ordinary circumstances. It was an eye naturally formed for laughing. There was a little mischief in it, and perhaps a little thoughtlessness, but no cruelty. Her hair she wore—untrammelled by the prevailing custom of using powder—in dark brown ringlets all round her fair head, which added considerably to the richness of her beauty. Altogether, she was such a one as almost any man would love, and certainly such as none would object to be loved by.

Thus far we have endeavoured to describe the beauty of her outward form; it will be a harder task to detail the graces of her mind. We might say that it was highly cultivated; that the education she had received, embraced all that was delicate, ennobling, virtuous, ornamental, and useful, so far as then taught to any of her sex. But this enumeration does not include the crowning charm, which made all the others to shine more beautifully, viz., religion. This was quiet and unassuming, but all-pervading. It was felt by those around her, and by none more frequently than by the young de Raymond, as by gentle and unobtrusive efforts, she strove to instruct his somewhat darker and less devout mind.

At length the days of their



youthful dreaming came to a close. Pierre was intended for a military life. The time arrived when he must separate from her whom he held dearest on earth. He left her to serve his king.

We have told of M. de Raymond's success in winning the affections of this young and noble lady: as yet we have said nothing of the numerous and honourable company of admirers who competed with him for the honour of her hand. They were many, and brave, and sincere; but of one of them only would we speak a few words.

He was somewhat older than de Raymond, and a great deal wiser. He had been at the most famous seminaries at home and abroad, to obtain learning at the purest sources. Moreover, his mind was of vast capability, so he drank in the instruction with avidity, and became, after a somewhat long course of study, one of the most accomplished scholars that France could boast of. A mere catalogue of his subjects of study would be tedious to recount. We shall endeavour to indicate the chief of these. Besides being acquainted with various languages, he was well versed in the history of his own and almost every other European country. Nor was his knowledge in this department that of the superficial or hasty reader, who is content to learn a lot of dates and facts; this, to him, was but the skeleton of history. He endeavoured, by careful examination of the facts, to arrive at the motives actuating the principal personages who figured in any great exploit or brought about any great revolution; he next instituted an inquiry as to whether the grounds of initiatory action were such as to belong only to the particular age or state of society under review, or whether they were founded on principles essential to society at all times, and would stand to be repeated, with a like success, under similar circumstances. Starting with the theory that no man ever exerted himself without having

some interest at stake, something to gain or lose, and that there was no such thing as disinterested action, he sought diligently for the motive in every event of social or political moment. He was a profound—though some may be inclined to add sinister—student of history. In the natural sciences, as then cultivated, he had made remarkable progress, although studies of such an unpractical bearing on the world around him were scarcely calculated to be very satisfying or attractive to a mind like his. As for mental philosophy, he was acquainted with the various systems then taught in his own or in other countries; but he believed in none of them, he laughed at all the schools. In religion, he knew all the articles of the creed which he professed; he had them arranged in his mind as a catalogue of the things it was considered orthodox and proper to hold. He knew them all, but he did not believe them; on very many points he was sceptical. Indeed, it will easily be credited that Christianity, as it then was in France, reduced to a few degrading and empty formalities, and, having little restraint on the lives of its very priests, was not likely to meet with a very favourable reception from a mind like his. He had studied it as a powerful means of swaying popular feeling, but just in the same way as he had examined Mohammedanism or any other *false* system. He merely looked at religion as a thing of utility in acquiring popular influence. There was no practical value attached to the profession of any creed, in his view, except so far as it was sanctioned by custom, or seemed to be recommended by expediency.

And this was one of those who worshipped the beauty and admired the virtues of Lucille de la Guise. And his admiration probably outdid that of her other admirers, just in the same proportion that his mental powers surpassed theirs; for even as a vain and frivolous mind, shallow and superficial in its view of things, is only



capable of a very partial and short-lived sentiment, so a strong mind, deep and firm in the grasp of its intelligence, possesses a capacity for correspondingly strong and lasting affections. This is probably unknown and unsuspected by the common herd, who judge from the outward appearance. Such observers, in the present instance, saw merely a man of elegant exterior, of polished and wonderfully winning manners, nothing more; for over the whole was thrown an air of careless unconcern, that led the beholders to suppose he was, and ever would be, indifferent to everything out of himself, and least of all to suspect him of being capable of such a feeling as an absorbing and devoted love. But such was his case. And his love was not merely of an outwardly fair person, graceful carriage, and a winning demeanour: it went further, admired what some of her other worshippers saw not, the beauties of her mind. Yea, her very piety was lovely in his eyes, though it was wanting in himself. He told his love. The fair one had never given him the least encouragement. She did not hate, she could hate no one, but she knew his dark mind and its vast resources, capable of such efforts that it seemed formed either to save a world by its benevolence, or to prey upon and ruin one by its crimes. She feared him, and refused him; and she did it somewhat hastily too. She even forbade him to frequent her father's house any longer. It was perhaps the only ungentle action of her life, and is very easily excused. And she little dreamt of the disastrous consequences that would follow her thus abruptly driving him, as it were, from her presence. She had severed the last bond that bound him to good, the only tie that kept him from villany. He ceased to believe in virtue. O that charity could remember and be always kind! Had she more gently dismissed him, his life perhaps had been marred by fewer foul actions. Amidst his

mind's thick darkness their beamed but one solitary star. Following its light, if sometime seen, though never very near, had staid his wandering steps, so that he had not quite lost his way; and at the last (who knows?) perhaps his life had ended well, but now that light was hid. She had turned him away; he began to war with the world and to plot, and now we are writing the history of his conspiracy. He entered the church, though it may seem strange; the Jesuits recognised his remarkable talents, and he became one of them, yea, soon rose to eminence among them; and now many feared him, none loved him, men called him the ABBE D'ALIGNÉ.

We have told of her youth, but now she was scarcely young, at least she was thirty-six or thirty-seven years of age; and though still beautiful, there was sorrow in her features that made her look older than she was. Much changed was she since the palmy days of the Count's courtship. She was no longer the light-hearted and gay being he had known.

She was still unmarried. When the Count was imprisoned she was faithful to him; and the advice of her relatives to give her hand to many a wealthy and noble suitor was disregarded: she would still be his or no one's. She lived most of the year at the family residence in Paris. Her leisure was devoted to charity. She visited the poor in their lowest haunts, gave them the blessings of this world, and strove to lead their thoughts to a better. She prayed for them. She prayed for her country. Nor was she unmindful of the love of her youth; she also prayed for him.

Not far from the Church of St. Magdalene was her house. Let us enter it, and behold her doings.

She sat in a mournfully-tapestried apartment, by a small and gloomy window, deeply occupied with some calculation. It was of her charities. She was counting up the money she had during the past week expended in alms, and laying similar plans of benevolence



for the week following. It was shortly after dusk; and a single lamp shed its sickly light through the dismal chamber. As she sat, diligently planning the good of the poor, she was interrupted by a domestic entering the apartment. She looked up and addressed the servant.

"Well, how is Madame?"

"Alas! Mademoiselle, she is no more. When I got there she had just breathed her last."

"Dead! and no friend beside her. Why did they not send for me?"

"A priest was with her to the last, Mademoiselle, and a stranger arrived just before her death. The servants thought he must be a relation of the family, but they did not remember to have seen him before; and he seemed to have travelled some distance."

"A stranger! It could not have been her husband appeared at last, though we all thought him dead?"

"Oh, no, Mademoiselle, he was quite a young man—at least, far too young for M. le Comte; but he seemed much affected by Madame's death, he was weeping by her bed when I came away."

"You may go," said Mademoiselle, dismissing the servant. Then, leaning back on her seat, she sighed—"I wonder if he can have forgotten me? Oh, no, I scarcely think he would forget. He thinks of me sometimes. And oh! how often I think of him. I wonder if, through the cold stone walls of his prison, He can feel that I think of him and love him? But, who knows, his long confinement may have impaired his mental faculties and his memory, and he may remember nothing. It would almost be a blessing; but no, his poor mother told me lately that he would perhaps have liberty shortly. Oh! I wish I could speed the time, or else sleep and forget its lapse till he is free. Or, perhaps, I might help some way or other. I wish I knew how. He depends for affection now wholly on me. And how can I, a poor, weak woman, do anything?"

She was sad. She sat a long while silent. She did not even sigh, but looked very earnest. She fell a thinking of some plan of communicating with Pierre.

While she was thus thinking of him she deemed a lonely prisoner, even then he was seeking admittance to her presence. As he went in at the door, there was a figure watching him from the other side of the street, though the darkness and the shadow of the houses prevented his being seen. That stealthy gazer's face, had the Count seen it, would have revealed to him that he had a bitter enemy. As the door closed, after admitting M. de Raymond, the Abbé—for he was the stealthy watcher—walked away; and as he did so, he gave a sigh, the first perhaps that he had uttered for half a lifetime. Wherefore that sigh? Perhaps it was at the remembrance of his youth, and the comparative innocence of the days when he knew Lucille. Surely it takes a long estrangement from virtue to make us quite forget her face. And when some little incident recalls the old acquaintance with her lovely person, even after a lifetime of crimes, the soul, wearied with its own evil doing, almost unknown to itself, gives vent to that fair test of all upward aspirations—a sigh—to be with her once more. Perhaps it was the last striving of a merciful and pitying God with that polluted spirit, crying to him and saying—"Soul, thou art feeble to burst the bonds; but I am strong. Thou can'st not break the chains that bind thee to evil; look upward to Me. Call, and I will answer; while thou art yet speaking, I will hear. Sin—defiled as thou art, I would wash thee. Lo, I stretch out my arms still loving and compassionate; for I hate not the sinner, but the sin. Return to Me." The Abbé heard not the call, or heeded it not, but passed on to continue his villanies. The Count, as we have said, entered the Hotel de la Guise; but he gave no name, he did not deem that safe.

Lucille's musings were cut short



by a servant entering to announce that the stranger from Madame de Raymond's desired particularly to see her. She inclined her head in acquiescence; for she felt unable to speak. Her heart almost stood still; could it be *he*?

The stranger was approaching; and her thoughts were wonderfully calm as she felt who it was. She had been in some measure prepared for his possible liberation, and sublimely trustful in Providence, she was waiting in sure hope of seeing him soon. He entered, closed the door behind him, and walked quickly up to where she stood—for she had risen on his approach. There was no cry of surprise, no wild or extravagant scene; theirs was a simple, quiet rapture. They met after nineteen years.

There was much to tell; and it was the Count that told it. What were the struggles and painful doubts of her faithful heart during his long imprisonment, she left untold; they were forgotten in the fulness of her present happiness. She was content to hear his story, and let him fancy her's. He spoke of his dreary years of solitude, and seemed to derive a sort of pleasure from the contemplation of his sufferings, and he saw how he was sympathised with, how he was, and had all along been, loved. And it was a long story, though one might have thought that the monotonous, dull round of dreary meditation between four stone walls, would have soon been told. But his tale was no succession of harrowing incidents—indeed, there was scarcely incident at all; it was a history of his mind. The only incidents were crowded into the last few days:—his change of dungeon—the false fetters—the plot against the King. Then Lucille trembled; for she knew not to what dark deeds desperation might beckon him. But her mind was soon relieved, and she again rejoiced—the more so from having a little doubted him—that Pierre de Raymond was still faithful to his King. He told her also of his

position as partially free, and showed her his design to overthrow the conspiracy, so far, at least, as he had any plan matured. Here came a struggle with her heart between virtue and affection. She thought she had friends and influence enough to assist his escape from France; and that would be no want of duty to an ungrateful king, whom he had already served too well. The struggle was short, and bold virtue won. When she saw the enthusiastic loyalty of her knight, she would not breathe a word to lessen it; yea, she caught up his enthusiasm, and fortified his courage.

The conference was long, the stars the only watchers; for the city seemed to sleep; but the lovers of olden days seemed not to weary.

At length the light of the stars grew feebler, as if they saw, before man could, the coming sun. Morning approached. It was the morning air that fanned her cheek, leaning over the window to watch him hastening prison-ward, as he had told her—for *the last time*. She strained her eyes till he was out of sight. Then she humbly knelt, and her eyes sought heaven, beseeching Him, to whom there is neither night nor darkness, to watch and shield and bless her Raymond.

## CHAPTER XIX.

ALL ARE BUSY: SOME ABOUT FOLLY,  
ONE ABOUT DUTY, AND MANY  
ABOUT MISCHIEF.

THE palace was a scene of mirth. Ambassadors had just arrived from England, bearing friendly messages, and Louis XIV. was signifying his pleasure at the existence of such amicable relations between the King of England and himself, by organising a sort of fete to the envoys. The Court was, therefore, merry—more merry than usual, and the French Court was at no time very famous for sobriety. The arrival of these Englishmen was an agreeable incident just then; for it relieved the monotony of their ordinary, and therefore somewhat stale, round of amuse-



ments ; and they made merry with the king, in honour of the deputies, with as good a grace, and as heartily as could have been wished. They worked hard to make merry ; and the scene, to a superficial observer, looked happy enough. There were, of course, petty jealousies and hatreds occasionally apparent ; but these were noticed by few : every one was too busy enjoying himself to mind his neighbour.

It will readily be believed that on that day the King refused to give any attention to ordinary business. Such a thing was not to be thought of ; it would mar the pleasure, and so must stand. All who sought to see his Majesty on that day regarding matters of any importance were, consequently, put off till another day ; and if not satisfied with that sort of procrastination, they were rudely repulsed. The King's habits on such occasions were well known, and therefore few sought to obtrude any matter of serious weight upon his notice on that day. But there were some, who either were ignorant of the King's commands in such cases, or, from the urgent nature of their affairs, were willing to risk the royal displeasure. None were admitted. One after another they were repulsed, more or less civilly in an exactly opposite proportion to their importunity. With none of them has this history to do save one. He was a very old man, and wore the dress of a monk. He had never been seen at the palace before, and those of the royal household who saw him approach and retire, wondered who he was, and what he could have to say to the King. They did not indeed think of inquiring his business, and although they had asked he might not have told them. He knew, by the confessions of the dying, that there was a conspiracy against the king, and he came for the purpose of warning him. As it was he went away with a disappointed look. Had he seen his sovereign, and spoken the words of caution into the royal ear, he would have felt more comfortable—a weight

would have been off his mind. But perhaps it was just as well that he did not gain the interview he sought ; for those who speak solemn words, such as are those of warning, in the midst of pleasure, are rarely welcome, and the old man's feelings might have received a wound which his own benevolent soul would never have led him to expect. As he left the palace gate two beggars, who were loitering there, observed his eyes turned towards heaven, and saw by the motion of his lips that he prayed. He knew that although the king turned away his ear from warning there was yet a resource, and he went thither. God was able to shield even those who thought not of Him ; so the devout monk prayed for his sovereign's safety. And the two beggars beholding him followed, intending to ask alms ; for they said one to another that he was a good man, and therefore would likely be charitable. Their logic was pretty correct.

As the old man went on his way he met the superior of a suburban monastery, whom he saluted humbly and respectfully, receiving a lordly and patronising recognition in return. He had consulted this dignitary before going to visit the King, and he now stopped and narrated his disappointment in not having obtained an audience ; lamenting the deep devotion of his majesty to pleasure, to the exclusion of more important and weighty matters. The Abbé, for it was he, affected to sympathise with him under his disappointment ; and compared the gaiety of the King, in the existing state of political affairs, to the heedless rioting of Belshazzar in sacred history. Thereafter the two separated ; the Monk to pray for the safety of his sovereign, the Abbé to plot his ruin.

Greatly was M. D'Aligne occupied that day ; for it was the last before the catastrophe. On the morrow at evening, or rather, late at night, was the blow to be struck. First, he had a long conference with the merchant, M. Antoin



Roussy, receiving his plans for the disposal of his forces, and giving him final instructions. Then he had an interview with the Beggar, in a vault beneath one of the most fashionable churches; and at this meeting he was introduced to one or two of the beggar-republicans. Their own leader had already planned their places of meeting, in small groups at different corners, all so near one another as to be able, on a given signal, to march in order, in one direction, so as to meet their chief in a compact body, within a few yards of the palace-gates. The signal was to be the tolling of the bell of that very church beneath which they then were. These arrangements were so perfect that the Abbé required to make no alteration of, or addition to, them; and he marvelled more than ever at the Beggar's truly wonderful abilities.

Three captains of the royal troops were his military confidants; and he had left them to make their own arrangements regarding the disposal of the troops, only stipulating that he should be duly apprised of them when fixed. To get a report of these arrangements was his last work that day, prior to meeting the Count in the evening, to whom he was to introduce these three captains, who had been induced to enlist in the business solely on the understanding that he was to command the whole rebel army. At first they had wished him to have the chief command; and now, though they might each have desired to fill that high post, they were well aware that the failure of the Count to appear at their head would tend to create disappointment and disunion among the soldiers generally; so, for the present, they buried their private ambitions, and were willing to submit to M. de Raymond as their superior. The Abbé was not unaware of their individual aspirations to fill the chief command: and, therefore, he mentally applauded his own wisdom in having selected a leader for them, who was not one of themselves, and

whose very misfortunes tended to make him already a sort of hero in their eyes; seeing it was evident that petty jealousies would have made it very difficult, if at all possible, for them to submit with a good grace to a commander chosen from among their own companions; much less would they have been likely to fight heartily, should fighting be necessary, under a leader so chosen. These three captains, therefore, were merely employed to make the military arrangements and give orders to the troops, in the absence of their commander, the Count, whom they were told they would see this evening. These officers were men whose sole motive for joining in this conspiracy was their own advancement. The Abbé had always been sure of them, seeing they worshipped the deity, self-aggrandisement, which too often makes the most virtuous unscrupulous and forgetful of principle. After M. D'Aligne had received their report, he took leave of them, requesting the favour of their company in the evening at the Cabaret St. Antoin.

The Merchant also was very busy that day. After his interview with the Abbé, he made several visits to the principal men of his company, communicating to them any additional suggestions of the Abbé, and reminding them of the hour on the morrow when they were to begin to assemble, and the time when they were to be ready for action.

The Beggar was not idle that day. He gave his final orders to the chief men of his community, and they proceeded quietly and unobtrusively throughout the city and its suburbs, communicating intelligence and giving commands.

And so, that night, long before the meeting in the Cabaret, all was ready; they had written the doom of France, and waited but to execute the sentence.

Of one only who was of the number of conspirators have we not here spoken; it remains to say something of the Count. While



all the rest were so busily engaged, what was he doing?

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE PRISONER AND THE KING. SOME EVENING PRAYERS.

To see how the Count was engaged, we must request the reader, for the last time in this story, to accompany us to the Bastile. Its gloomy walls are still his abode by day ; for he has always punctually returned before morning. On this occasion, just as the darkness had begun to set in, he issued from the old iron gate. He walked down the slope more slowly than usual ; and he carried with him some burden which made a rattling noise. When he had gone a little way, he turned round, and, for a few moments, looked sadly—almost, it seemed, with a regretful eye—at the ponderous building. It could not be grief as far as himself was concerned ; for his imprisonment was at an end ; he had stolen out *this time* to return no more, and was carrying away his fetters. Perhaps it was sadness at the thought of the untold wretchedness of those still within the gloomy walls, to whom no pitying hand held out the hope of freedom—pity felt it may be by him for the first time, as now he would himself be no longer under the same roof to share their captivity. And who knows but the misty future before him, of dark uncertainty, perhaps of death before another night should close, had something to do with that melancholy shade in his careworn features. But he had no time to indulge in, or even to feel, pity ; a work was before him, and he was to set about it forthwith. Since he had been informed of the important part he was expected to play in the coming tragedy, he had resolved to draw back at the last moment, calculating that such an unexpected derangement of affairs, as leaving the soldiers without their promised leader, would necessarily hamper the other conspirators, and probably so disorder their

plans by its suddenness, as to delay the execution of the plot, if not altogether to overthrow it.

This proposed system of action certainly cannot be said to display any great knowledge of the cunning, vast resources, and probable subterfuges of such a man as the Abbé ; but at least it had the merit of being well intended ; and, moreover, it seemed at present the only mode of procedure left for one whose sole resource was himself.

This plan was resolved on, however, only as a last resort. Before he was reduced to that extremity, he was once more to try the King. It was now the third evening since he had appeared so abruptly before his Majesty ; and to-night he resolved to make a second such attempt ; so he took his way to the Church of St. Magdalene. After entering the passage, and closing the pillar behind him, he halted and struck a light. There lay his costume as a sorcerer, which he had worn on a former occasion. He put it on a second time. He took a piece of paper from his tablets and wrote a few words, then, taking up his fetters, he travelled onward through the passage. Arrived at the other end, he softly opened the panel, approached, and peeped through the curtain. There sat the King, in easy but languid attitude. His pleasures that day had fatigued him, and he was weary. His eyes were nearly closed, when the rustling of the curtain made him start, and again he beheld his unwelcome visitor. He made no attempt to summon assistance ; for he remembered the former visit and mysterious disappearance, and was convinced that he gazed upon no earthly form. The Count saw the effect of his sudden entrance, and, partly conjecturing the King's thoughts, spoke in a hoarse and solemn tone, as follows:—"Stone walls, your Majesty perceives, are of no avail ; fetters do not trammel my movements. I have come again, but will come no more ; or if I do come, it shall be to another King ; and you shall have gone from the



world. Know, Sire, that there is a thoroughly organised plot, complete in all its parts, and dangerously headed by those whom you would least suspect; and if that plot succeed, to-morrow night your reign shall end; another shall sit on your throne."

During this speech, the King—whose courage always seemed to rise when he heard that his visitor used at least a human-sounding voice—was slowly moving in the direction of the door. He either intended trying to make a hasty exit himself, or else to cut off the Count's way of escape, as he probably still thought he had managed to enter noiselessly by the usual door. The Count observed the manœuvre, and said hastily—"Move a step, Sire, and I shall go as I came, but not by such a door as lets in and out your ordinary courtiers; I do not need such contrivances. But then, I shall go away without telling you of the conspiracy; and you shall be unable to guard against it."

The King stood for a few moments irresolute, and then, complying with the Count's request, returned to the place where he was standing at first, still, however, keeping his eye fixed upon M. de Raymond.

"Sorcerer,—for such you seem to be, if you have really broken out of the Bastile—unless, indeed, you have contrived to bribe your gaoler—I will listen to you; but be plain, and be brief. Who are the conspirators? Reveal their names, and give proof of their guilt, and you shall choose your own reward."

"Your Majesty does not then forget what was the guerdon I sought before, freedom for Raymond."

"Ah! anything but that. What is Raymond to you? Will letters of nobility not be of far more use to you than the liberty of one who, when you have got for him, will, in all likelihood, forget to thank you. Such is the world we live in; no man knows gratitude for half-an-hour. I see you begin to

be of my opinion. We give our solemn promise that you shall be——"

"Sire, do not trifle; it is vain. Your promises will avail you nothing, not that I doubt you would perform them, but that my terms cannot alter. I will have his liberty and nothing else; and let it be to-night."

"Give me till to-morrow to consider."

The King's courage was rising again. He began to plot the Sorcerer's capture. By to-morrow night he might have guards in waiting, and have him seized. The Count spoiled that plan by his reply.

"To-morrow will be too late. To-morrow he shall be free; but you shall not give him freedom; the Conspirators shall. You can free him to-night and retain your throne; and, since you seem to fear imposture, if you find not my story of a foul revolt now planning completely true, and more horrible than I have depicted, send him to prison again. You see, sire, how I plead, as for myself. I am your loyal subject and desire your safety; write an order for his release, or here—sign this paper." So saying, he drew from his bosom the paper written in the secret passage, and presented it to his Majesty, who trembled as he put out his hand to take it. It was a perfect document, wanting only the royal signature. As the King looked at it he became bolder than ever. The writing and the paper, and everything about it, was mortal after all; and it was but a man he spoke to, albeit, rather a mysterious and powerful one. So he turned to the Count with his most majestic look, and said, "No, I shall not release him to-night. You can come again, to-morrow, if you chose. And now quit this apartment. Another moment, and I shall summon my guards."

"Is it, then, malice to poor Raymond that makes you so refuse to free him? It can be nothing else. His secret and yours cannot be the cause, seeing that I can



make it public. And malice for what? Was he not a faithful servant? Learn, learn posterity! Be slow to serve your kings; when you do that best, they will reward you with fetters, in weight proportioned to the magnitude of your services. O, King Louis, how depraved a monarch does the Lord of the Universe, in his anger, allow to fill the throne of France! Has the All-wise put the lives and liberties of men in your hands—the life and liberty of such as Pierre de Raymond? No, He has not; and I shall prove it. Tomorrow, did I say, he shall be free? No, to night he shall be free; and I shall free him!”

“Do!” cried the King, thinking by that request to bring to a stand the ravings and mere bravado of an imposture; and his Majesty sneered mockingly as he spoke.

Where was the sneer, when the hood was thrown back, and the cloak cast away, and the old, long-ago-known and well-remembered features, met his gaze? There was a heavy silence as they stood face to face, *the Prisoner and the King!*

“I see you know me, Sire; and you should do so well, for I served you faithfully; and you know my reward: in the first place, imprisonment, intended to have been for life; and, as if that were not enough, fetters were lately added to my miseries: you gave me these.” And he flung down the chain and ball.

His Majesty started at the sound, and, collecting all his energies, called loudly for assistance. It was too late. The Count rushed toward the curtain, [and turning round, cried out—“Vain, vain your guards! in power at least I am a Sorcerer still!” Presently there was a sharp report, and smoke as before; and when it cleared away he could not be found.

The Count, full of disappointment, hastened to the Hotel de la Guise, and told his ill-success to Lucille. When all was quiet in the city, he returned again to the secret passage, where he intended to pass the night.

From Paris, during these silent hours, no doubt many prayers ascended to heaven. Of a few we know and will tell. Lucille prayed for Pierre de Raymond; she prayed long and sincerely. The old Monk of St. John, who had that day been so unsuccessful in obtaining an audience of the King, was kneeling at a window of his convent which looked towards the east, and among his petitions he forgot not to ask blessings for the friendless Count. The last, perhaps, sounds stranger than these; it was from that damp and loathsome cell, almost worse than a prison—within the pillar of St. Magdelene’s Church, there went up evening orisons from him for whom those prayed. He besought God for the King, that He would keep him safely, and grant him true repentance. And there, he, who might have entered the palace when he chose, and have revenged himself by killing his Sovereign, loyally lay down on his cold earth-bed, and slept as only those *can* sleep to whom God has given—what He is always ready to bestow, but what no man has by nature—a quiet conscience.

## CHAPTER XXI.

THE LAST DAY OF SUSPENSE; FOR THE ABBE PROPOSES TO DETHRONE LOUIS XIV. IN THE COOL OF THE EVENING.

THE morning was dull and cloudy, as if warning that disasters were at hand. Two only of the chief conspirators had slept; and as they rose that morning perhaps their thoughts might have been expressed in words very much as follows:—The Merchant, as he beheld the dawn, would naturally say, “This is the last day of a corrupted Government: to-night will commence an enlightened and more liberal monarchy;” whereas the Beggar would have said, “This is the last day of monarchy in France: henceforward a *free Republic*.” As for the Abbé, he had slept none; his meagre form seemed to require no refreshment or rest; the excitement attendant on the management



of this diabolical plot appeared to supply the place of both. The crisis was near, and he who held the moving power in his hands sat calmly and collectedly waiting for the moment when it should be time to say "strike!"

He was in the Cabaret St. Antoin, and standing beside him was one meanly clad—a chosen tool, nevertheless, picked from among the beggars, to act an important, though humble, part in the work in the approaching night. He was to give the signal to the citizens when King Louis was dead, and he was now receiving his instructions.

"Valentine," said the Abbé, "open both doors, and make sure that no one is listening."

The tatterdemallion, whom the Abbé addressed as Valentine, did as he was ordered; and, having satisfied M. D'Aligne that no one was within ear-shot, he carefully closed the doors again; notwithstanding which double security the Abbé, with his habitual caution, sunk his voice to a very low tone, as he gave his tool instructions. "In this small box you will find a torch made to give a very brilliant light. It will be seen all over Paris, if displayed in a sufficiently lofty position. You will be so placed as to hear a pistol fired, twice in succession, from inside the palace. On hearing the second shot, you are to light the torch and wave it in the air until you hear a shout from below, whereby you will know that it has been observed: and you may then descend."

"Where am I to be when I light it, your reverend lordship?"

"I am coming to that: you are to be on the roof of the highest part of the palace."

The beggar looked aghast: he seemed both amazed and horrified.

"You are not afraid to climb so high?" sneered the Abbé. "I thought your chief said you were fit for anything, and were not likely to be afraid."

"Afraid, your lordship? no; but how am I get up?"

"I have not done yet," said the Abbé, in a tone that was meant to

check the talkative familiarity of his questioner. "I will not likely ask you to wave a torch from the palace-roof without telling you how to get up. Listen, and you shall hear how easy the climbing will become. There is a part of the roof that lets in water and needs to be repaired. M. Jacques Mosier, Rue de la Fontaine, has been intending to repair it every day this week, but has been sick. He is not yet recovered; so he is to send a man to do the work. You are that man. You have to go to M. Mosier, and he will give you suitable clothing for such a workman, and will also provide you with tools. You are to go late in the afternoon; and it will take you a great while to do the work—you understand?"

"Yes, your reverend lordship."

"It will take a long time, as I was saying; but being anxious to finish it, you will work late, and will not leave off till ten o'clock. When you hear that hour ringing, you will climb from the roof of the lower part of the palace, on which the work is to be done, to the very highest part of the roof, and there stand waiting. When you hear two pistols fired after each other, you shall light your torch. Tinder is, but a slow method of getting light; I shall teach you a quicker. Take that, and rub it briskly across the floor."

The Beggar took a match which the Abbé held out to him, and doing as he was directed, produced a light, apparently much to his own astonishment.

"Here are several of the same," continued the Abbé. "When you have struck the match, apply it to the red end of your torch, which will immediately blaze brightly; then wave it as I have told you. Do you now understand all you have to do?"

The Beggar bowed in token of assent.

"Then come here before you go to your work, and you shall get the torch and matches; and I can then remind you of anything you may have forgot."



A noise at the door, giving notice that some one wished admittance, the Abbé dismissed him. As he went out, M. Antoin Roussy made his appearance, breathless and terrified.

"What now?" asked the Priest, somewhat contemptuously. "Oh, right reverend Abbé, what shall we do?—to have our plans all deranged just when we were ready to strike!"

"Well, what has happened, Monsieur, to put you in such a state of misery? Have you dreamt, that we are defeated?"

"Have you not, then, heard the news?"

"What news?"

"I thought so," said the Merchant, with a deep sigh; "I knew you could not be aware——"

"Aware of what?—speak out, and don't waste time."

"Some mysterious apparition visited the King last night, and threatened to kill him or do something very awful. Then the visitor offered to make a revelation of our project; but His Majesty grew frightened, and called the guards, whereupon the mysterious one vanished in a flash of lightning."

"Well," said the Abbé, calmly, "I have heard all that; I suppose you think it was a spirit?"

"I think!—don't you think so? But the most extraordinary part of the story is yet to come. After the spirit had disappeared, there was found in the room a chain with a heavy iron ball attached to it."

"Poor wretch!" said the Abbé; "he must have come from purgatory." This remark was made in the contemptuous tone of one who evidently felt for the credulity of those who believe in any such place.

"Really, Monsieur l'Abbé, I did not expect you to treat a serious matter with such levity. Consider what damage our cause is like to receive."

"How?"

"That is just what I am unable to see. And that is because you have not heard all. His Majesty still believing that it was a human

being who visited him at that unseasonable hour, and thinking that he must have come in by the door, has ordered the officer who formerly watched there to be dismissed, and two others placed in his room. These new guards may not be favourable to us, and may refuse to let us pass——"

"M. Roussy," interrupted the Abbé, with calm dignity, "I perceive you have nothing to tell me that I do not already know. All is provided for; and the whole will go on to-night exactly as if nothing had occurred. I have arranged all about the guards, and everything else. So not only take courage yourself, but see that nothing like a panic be allowed to seize any of our adherents. Tell them that everything is not only as well as it was before, but, in some respects, much better. In the meantime, make such visitations as shall enable you to spread confidence among your own band. It is high time you were begun; so, now, leave me. The Abbé waved his hand; and the Merchant went out, muttering to himself, "Wonderful man!"

There seemed to be no rest for the Priest that day. Scarcely was M. Roussy gone, when the doors again opened, and admitted one whose bearing at once declared him a soldier, or, if he was not one, his figure was eminently fitted to deceive the beholder into supposing that such was his profession. He made a low bow, and waited to be addressed.

"I told you last night I should require you for service of an important nature. Your reward shall be given by the Order we both serve—proportioned to the service."

A bow was the only reply.

"You are to personate the Count de Raymond, and are to lead the soldiers to-night. You have been in prison for nineteen years, and have just escaped last night. You will find all your history that it is important you should know, as well as that of your family, on the table in the adjoining closet, where you will also find the necessary



disguises and dress. You had better apply yourself to these matters without delay, as in an hour or two I expect an officer to visit me to whom I shall present you."

"I shall be ready when you require me, my lord."

And the quasi-count retired to the closet. The Abbé sat still and wrote. He was planning the future Government of France, and committing it to writing; only with, the ever-suspicious caution of a Jesuit, he wrote in a private cipher, understood by a few of his own order. While he was thus engaged, M. St. Remy entered, and was directed to enter the closet by a motion of the hand. He obeyed without uttering a word. He had been sent for to dress and get up the fictitious count, so as to make the resemblance as perfect as possible. While he is doing so, let us state, in brief, some little explanation of this new move in the Abbé's game.

After the meeting of conspirators on the previous evening, at which M. de Raymond was not present being, as the reader knows, elsewhere engaged, the Abbé set himself to think of some one who could be procured to personate the Count; and as soon as possible, after the conspirators were dispersed, he sent and secured the services of the person whom St. Remy was now engaged dressing in the closet. He was a mere adventurer, perfectly willing to undertake anything that would prove remunerative; and M. D'Aligne had fixed upon him, because he possessed one advantage, viz., a certain resemblance to the Count in figure, and even in face; not that the likeness was any way striking, but it was such as, with a similar dress and the assistance of art to disguise a little, might be made to pass very readily for M. de Raymond among those whose acquaintance with him was slight, and, of course, would perfectly succeed with those who had not seen him since he was imprisoned, or who had never seen him at all.

The Abbé had become suspicious

of the Count, from his ill-dissembled coolness in the affairs of the conspiracy, visible especially at the last two meetings at which he had been present; and he was merely taking precautions to prevent the remotest possibility of his schemes being spoiled by the probable failure of M. de Raymond in making his appearance to take part in the rebellion.

Before entering on this explanatory digression, we left the Count's representative dressing and disguising, or rather, being dressed and disguised, by the accomplished hands of Jean St. Remy, in the chamber adjoining that in which the Abbé sat writing. The latter rose and went to the door of the closet; opening it, he surveyed M. Jean's handiwork, and seemed satisfied.

"You understand your instructions, M. l'Comte?"

"Perfectly, M. l'Abbé."

"Your voice should be lower in tone: that is very important, as one of the captains has already been presented to himself; and his voice is very striking; it is deep and melodious."

"I shall try to profit by your instructions," said the quasi-count, in a tone somewhat altered.

"That will do better," said the Priest, approvingly.

While they were speaking, some one sought admittance at the outer door. On a motion from the Abbé, Jean went to open it. An officer entered, who came to be presented to the Count de Raymond. He was conducted into the ante-chamber.

"M. le Comte," said the Priest, "I have the honour of presenting to you Captain d'Eville, who is to head a division of the troops under your command."

The disguised made a low bow. "Since we are to be fellow-soldiers," said he, "I trust we shall be friends. Pray be seated for a few moments, even though we have but little time to spare at present."

"You do me too much honour, M. le Comte," replied the Captain,



"in offering to accept of my poor friendship. I can only express, in return, the pride I feel at the prospect of serving under a general whose own services have been so distinguished."

"My services, I am afraid, are remembered by but very few."

"I am already somewhat acquainted with them, through the kindness of the right reverend Abbé, to whom I am also indebted for some information regarding the renowned deeds of your ancestors—which last were, almost of themselves, sufficient vouchers for the character of the son."

"I feel grateful for your kindness in looking favourably on any former achievement of mine, which my long imprisonment has almost erased from my own recollection."

"In so recently acquired a friend I hope you will not consider it impertinent, if I venture to congratulate you on being now at last set free, and having before you—as I trust there is before us all—so bright a future."

"I am deeply indebted for your kind interest in my misfortunes, of which at some other time, when we have both more leisure, we shall converse at length. As for what is yet before me, I devoutly hope that there will presently open up a very bright future, not only for me or for you, but for France. The time approaches, however, when we should all be at our posts. We must now, therefore, cut short our discourse, to be renewed, I doubt not, on a not-far-distant occasion. In the meantime, we must both to duty. You are furnished, I believe, with full instructions, which you will now issue to those under your command, so far as it is expedient. As for me, I have a little more business to detain me here; that despatched, I shall join you. Adieu!"

The Captain ceremoniously saluted his superior, and took his leave. The Abbé also retired, closing the door of the closet, which he requested the disguised to fasten from the inside; and he afterwards also left the Cabaret.

## CHAPTER XXII.

THE LAST ASSEMBLY OF THE CONSPIRATORS.—THE ABBÉ ON TREASON.—THE PROP OF A FALLING THRONE.

THE evening came on. It was damp and dark, a raw winter evening. The sky was very cloudy; so, as it grew later, there was no shining of those heavenly orbs which make cheerful even a winter night. As if the queen of the heavens knew that dark deeds were to be done in Paris, and was angry with her Parisian sons, she shone not forth, but hid her face behind dense clouds of mist; it was dark indeed, for there was neither moon nor star.

No one would have supposed that anything extraordinary was to happen that night—that any of the citizens harboured in their breasts other than peaceful intentions and amicable feelings towards any of their fellow-men, far less that they meditated the murder of their King. The streets were unusually quiet, so quiet indeed, owing to the uncomfortable state of the weather, that they almost seemed deserted.

The landlord of the Cabaret St. Antoin stood in the door of his house, apparently observing the weather. His ear caught the hollow sound of a measured footstep coming along the street in his direction. As the foot passenger drew nearer, he proved to be a person of military bearing; and notwithstanding that his cloak was so wrapped about him as effectually to conceal the most of his face, the landlord at once recognised the Count. Stepping aside to let M. de Raymond pass, he said—

"Your lordship will find your dress in the outer chamber to-night. The closet is locked, his reverend lordship the Abbé having found it necessary to make use of it himself."

The Count merely inclined his head in token that he comprehended the information given, and was satisfied with the arrangement.



He ascended the stairs. Arrived in the usual chamber of conference, he found the garments necessary, and proceeded with all possible despatch to put them on. A large mirror had been recently added to the furniture of the apartment. So when he was attired, he surveyed himself in it, and took a seat to await the arrival of the others.

On what line of conduct had he resolved? Had he once more relapsed? Would he join in the treason, seeing that the King had proved himself so unworthy? Would personal hatred at last prevail? His fixed and stern look almost seemed to say so. Well, perhaps a few would blame him, after all his sufferings and ill-usage. Some might even think such conduct was naturally to be expected of a brave man under the circumstances. In the prospect of such questionable heroism will the Count at last forget his duty? We shall see.

He did not sit long alone. The door opened, and the Merchant entered hurriedly, and somewhat flustered. He seemed surprised at finding no one yet arrived but the Count. He cordially saluted that gentleman, however, and then, with the greatest precipitation—as if afraid that he might not have sufficient time to tell his story—began giving an account of the mysterious visitation at the Palace. He wound up his narrative by coming to a conclusion in regard to that wonderful occurrence, which was much more superstitious than ingenious. He treated it as an apparition, or unearthly appearance, sent to warn the King that he had but a short time to reign; and, from the whole tenor of his remarks, it was evident that M. Roussy regarded it as an encouragement to the conspirators, an intimation that Providence favoured and seconded their design.

M. de Raymond listened with exemplary patience, and even with some apparent interest, to the narrative portion, as if he had been up to that time completely ignorant of the circumstances spoken of. The Merchant would no doubt

have gone on much further with his observations and reflections, had he not been interrupted by the entrance of the Beggar. He was so disguised that, but for his voice, as he greeted them, they could scarcely have known him; for he was habited like a monk of the Abbé's convent. No sooner was he seated, than the lock of the closet door was turned from the inside, and, calmly dignified, the Abbé gave a silent greeting to the company. He was dressed with more than usual care, as if for some uncommon occasion. He examined the doors leading out of the chamber to the stairs, and being satisfied that they were both shut, he walked slowly to a seat within a few feet of the Count.

"Are we all ready now, M. l'Abbé?" asked the Beggar, in a hollow but firm voice.

"With the help of Providence we are, and that, notwithstanding the wicked designs of our enemies, which are now happily frustrated."

"Of enemies!" said the Merchant, with some trepidation, "has any one, then, betrayed?"

"Yes, it is true; though not, as you might suppose, from some of our designs having been discovered by unforeseen accident or indiscretion; but I mean to say that the betrayal has been an act of deliberate and treacherous villany by one of our own number; ONE OF US IS A TRAITOR!"

Amazement was depicted on the Merchant's face; the Beggar looked quietly surprised; the Count alone seemed unmoved. M. de Raymond turned his eyes boldly to meet those of the Abbé as they searched his face; each gazed on the other for some moments in silence; while the eyes of the Merchant and the Beggar wandered alternately from the one to the other; they saw that the Count was the person accused.

"Count," said the Abbé, slowly, "I do not require to explain to you the nature of the apparition at the palace last night; you know who it was that told his Majesty of the conspiracy; and to leave no doubt of your identity, your chain



and ball of the prison were left behind you in the King's closet. What were your intentions I do not ask; but in regard to the important part I destined you to play, I desire you will explain what are your intentions with respect to this night's work. Do you think to draw back at the last moment, and so spoil our arrangements? or was your last night's conduct only a dangerous freak; and can you explain it to our satisfaction? I have not taken so little interest in your welfare as to have no right to ask an explanation; and I need not say that I sincerely trust you shall be able to give a satisfactory account of yourself—What have you to say?"

There was a moment of painful silence; and the Beggar's eye was fixed on M. de Raymond with an anxious look of suspense. With stern dignity, looking straightly at the Abbé, the Count replied,—

"Falsehood is not my nature; for I deem it cowardice at any time; and now, knowing not how soon my soul may be called to God, I shall still be guided by that light of one of His attributes, the noble voice of virtue—truth. You know, M. D'Aligne, that it was the bribe of liberty first lured me to treason; I then seized eagerly even the dirty cord that was to take me from my dungeon; but, on reflecting calmly, though I did feel—as I still do—grateful for your aid towards freedom, I soon began to experience a repugnance to your projects. Be his Government what it may, Louis XIV. is my King; God made him so, and He alone has a right to dethrone him. I could never feel myself called to be an instrument in so doing. On the contrary, I felt my conscience, which He taught to guide me, tell me to put forth my hand and save the King from evil, and you from villany; and it was to attempt both these that I sought the King last night. I did nothing dishonourable. If a man see his enemy about to commit a sin, will he not restrain him if possible, much more those who have acted like

friends? Of the plot I told nothing; I only warned the King of its existence. I never mentioned the names of his enemies, and intended—so far as I had any fixed plan of action—to inform you that you had better desist; and if you had not then given me a solemn promise to plot no more against your Sovereign, I should have felt bound to give your names to justice. This I meant to do in case of obtaining a boon which I craved of his Majesty. But enough; I did not succeed in any part of my business; his Majesty either did, or affected to, disbelieve my story altogether. As for the second matter of my own request, I asked the King to give me my liberty—himself to declare me free; but he refused me, so I kept all further counsel to myself, and hastened from his presence. You have now all my story. As to my further intentions, your first guess, M. l'Abbé, was correct; I mean to withdraw from the conspiracy!"

"Count," said M. D'Aligne, "are you in your senses? When you see how the King hates you, can you not return him hate for hate? Does not Providence hold out an opportunity of revenge? and at the same time you can give aid in giving liberty to France?"

"Give anarchy to France, or priestly tyranny to France, or whatever else you choose to call it; but do not profane the name of liberty, or call in the sacred name of Providence to sanction your evil doings. God hates treachery and bloodshed; and as He hears me at this moment, I pray Him to aid my arm this night in frustrating your foul intentions. And you," turning to the Beggar and the Merchant, who were staring at him in bewilderment, "beware, and draw back in time. I have no cause to love the King as a man; but I warn you that he shall not die to-night; if he do, you must first slay me."

"That," replied the Abbé, "my compassion shall deem unnecessary; you shall only be confined till all is over."

"When all is over," said the



Count, in a mocking tone; "and who is to lead your troops?"

A very slight smile of contempt was the answer of the Abbé's face, while his voice called to some one in the closet—"Ho, there!"

The door was opened, and the astonished Count beheld in the doorway the exact counterpart of his own person and dress as he had beheld himself in the mirror.

"You may now join your troops," said M. D'Aligne, addressing the pseudo Count. That personage, bowing to the company, retired. A smile of satisfaction was visible on the faces of two of the conspirators; on that of M. de Raymond, a look of bewildered despair.

"Bring wine," called the Abbé; and from the closet came the taciturn St. Remy, bearing the liquor asked for, as also goblets for the company. He set them down, two before the Abbé, and two on another table, beside which sat the Merchant and the Beggar. M. D'Aligne silently poured out for himself and the Count, requesting M. Roussy to do the same for himself and his companion. As the Abbé poured into the vessel farthest from him, he let fall into it some white powder from the bezil of his ring, which speedily mixed with the liquor; but as his hand passed over that next him, which he intended for himself, he dropt some also into it, but did it by accident, and without perceiving it. "I presume, Count," he said, "as we are about to drink success to our scheme and liberty to France, you cannot join us." The Abbé raised his hand, and pronounced in a firm voice the words, "Success to the conspiracy and liberty to France," the other two conspirators repeated the words after the Priest; and all three drank to the sentiment. M. de Raymond, apparently seized with a sudden desire to participate, took up the remaining goblet, and yelling out the words, "Liberty to France and confusion to the conspiracy," drained its contents to the bottom. M. D'Aligne slightly moved his eyes towards St. Remy, who remained standing in the

apartment, and said, "Jean, you may go now. Attend to your duty and be ready. Tell the guards at the door that they shall still be required for half-an-hour."

Jean passed out, closing the door.

"And now, gentlemen, it is time we were about our various duties. The King, from his adventure of last night, has caused some of the guards to be changed. This I at first thought would have inconvenienced us; but it turns out otherwise. Providence indeed seems to smile upon us at all hands. The King, who hates me, has found some occasion for my services. He desires that I should search into the truth of the story about a conspiracy, and has sent for me to-night. He wishes that my visit to him shall be late in the evening. I craved permission to bring with me the sub-prior of my convent, a discreet monk, who knew something of the conspiracy. My request is granted; and you," addressing the Beggar, "are to accompany me in that character; for which purpose I requested you to cover your ordinary dress with the monastic habit. We had better go now, as I wish to be there by half-past ten o'clock. For the rest, all our forces are to repair to their appointed stations from the various concealments at the stroke of eleven from the Church of St. Magdalene. Its bell will easily be heard and distinguished as far as we require. You may now retire, gentlemen. I have got a few words for the Count's private ear."

M. de Raymond started at the mention of his name, and the Beggar, seizing hold of him, said, in a voice little above a whisper, "Take advice from me. I have never injured you; on the contrary, I have always taken a deep interest in your welfare. Do nothing rashly. Wait here quietly till we come again, and I shall then teach you that you have something more to live for than you are yet aware of. And, in the meantime, put not yourself in the way of harm by any wild and hopeless attempt. I ask it for the sake of Lucille."



The last word fell on the Abbé's ear, and he gave the slightest possible approach to a start as he heard it, and his face for a few moments seemed to gather blackness. The Beggar, as he ceased speaking, turned towards the door, saying to the Priest as he passed, "Deal tenderly with him as you value my friendship."

The Count seeming to reflect for an instant, rushed towards the door, but the Abbe caught hold of him with a strength never to be expected from his appearance.

"Are you mad?" said he. "What would you do? I have two faithful servants behind the door of the cabaret who would shoot you before you could possibly pass. You have no arms, and cannot defend yourself. But why fight against fate?"

"And do you call yourself one of the Almighty's priests, and yet go about deeds like these?" asked the Count, seating himself in despair. "The devil is your master, and you may yet receive your wages when you least expect it."

While the Count was speaking, M. D'Aligne was moving towards the door. Opening it and looking back upon de Raymond, he said, in a voice betraying fiendish, though trying to assume outward calmness:

"Fool! You can now reap your reward. I knew you were desperate, and thought you might try to escape, notwithstanding the strong bars of the windows and doors. So when you took your wine, I was careful there should be more in it than you imagined; the poison is such that you cannot live more than half-an-hour; and if you do not sit quietly, you but slay yourself the sooner."

The Count uttered a cry, so bitter, so hopeless—it seemed to come from the very throat of Despair herself; it must have pierced any heart that felt human pity, but the Abbé waited not; he passed out, locked both the doors behind him, and joined the Beggar, who was waiting for him at the stair-foot. The Merchant had gone to the place where his confederates were to assemble.

The two dark figures pass out of the cabaret, thence swiftly along the street, and as they go they commune together. The one, of a fiendish nature, seems to revel in that which is wicked, whom we feel inclined to hate, and to invoke destruction to attend his steps. The other, having about him much that is nobly good, and yet, for some hidden but powerful cause, darkly disloyal—with whom we are inclined to feel some sympathy, but we cannot bid him God speed, for he goes in evil company, and an unlovely errand. The mist soon obscures, and at length hides, their retreating figures. So we return to the cabaret.

The Count again a prisoner, and with so near a prospect of death, sat for some time silently disconsolate, as if giving way to despair. His eyes gazed vacantly on the door, through which all hope of exit had just been cut off. Presently he raised himself, and murmured, as if thinking aloud—

"Was it to come to this I have striven—to die ignobly thus? Better have pined in prison. Was it for this, my mother, that you bade me serve the King? Serve him!—yes, a light dawns on me; dying as I am, if I can but get there in time, I may yet be the prop of the throne of France!"

He cast his eyes about for a weapon; and turning suddenly toward the window, observed a heavy bar of iron which was intended to secure the casement from within, but owing to the strong bars on the outside, it was seldom called into requisition, but was allowed to hang loose and unused. He wrenched it away with no great effort, and opening the window, placed one end of it between two of the iron stanchions which were on the outside. Using his lever with herculean force, he bent one of them so as to lift one of the ends out of the stone into which they were fixed. It was then very easily moved altogether. Another followed in the same manner, and there was space enough to pass through. He stepped out, and,



CHAPTER XXIII.

THE PRIEST AND THE BEGGAR WHILE AWAY THE TIME BY GIVING THEIR SOVEREIGN AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR OWN CONSPIRACY. STRANGE REVELATIONS! ABOUT TO STRIKE. THE RESCUE.

still retaining his formidable weapon, with the recklessness of a madman leaped out into the open street. The watchmen below were alarmed, they at once comprehended the whole, and set off in pursuit; but they could not keep up with the flying madman as he bounded along, for he did more than run. He made straight for the Church of St. Magdalene. On his way he passed by the Hotel de la Guise; casting up his eyes, he saw a shadowy figure at one of the windows, it was she, but he had no time to say farewell; though his own moments were so surely and shortly numbered, the King must be saved. He must perform his mother's last request, if he would join her in the land of blessedness.

As he approached the church, he discerned some figures not far from it, soldiers of the guards, and though very breathless, he called out—"Save the King, he will be murdered. You cannot get to the palace-gates in time, and perhaps if you could, they would not let you in, but I know a secret passage; follow me;" and he pressed against the pillar which immediately obeyed his touch. The soldiers hesitated. There were three of them; but they thought the Count was mad, and scrupled about following him. But there was an old monk passing by, who stopped to see what was the matter. He heard that his Majesty was in danger, and knew enough to make him believe it true. The Count at once addressed himself to him—"You know that I am not mistaken, that there are plots against the King; I beseech you to help me."

"It is too true," said the Monk, in haste; "I believe it may be as you have just heard. Let us on; give me a sword," and he snatched one for himself from one of the guards. "On!" he cried to the Count; "I at least will follow."

They disappeared within the pillar: and the soldiers, at length half persuaded, followed too.

We must go back a little in the evening, and see how the King was engaged while waiting for the Abbé's visit. He was seated in his privy chamber, apparently very much at his ease indeed, and certainly by no means like one who apprehended anything like a serious plot against his life. Such was his Majesty's confidence in the vigilance of his officers and the loyalty of his subjects in general, that he treated the matter of the conspiracy hinted at, as very trifling—an affair that would be easily sifted out, and the offenders seized and punished. By securing the services of M. D'Aligne, he thought he was in the fairest possible way for finding out anything of that description; moreover, the Priest had intimated his intention of bringing along with him a friar of his own convent, who already knew something about the conspiracy, which his Majesty was somewhat impatient to hear, more from curiosity, however, than from any serious apprehensions.

Until the Abbé should arrive, the King was whiling away the time transacting some trifling state business, and giving a few instructions to his private secretary. His Majesty had a companion on this evening, M. le Duc de Mobile. The nobleman was about twenty-five years old, and some may think rather a young man to be chosen as the familiar bosom friend of his Sovereign (for such was the post of honour which he had the happiness to fill); but it was one of the weaknesses of Louis XIV. to have a great fancy for youthful companions. And this was not even a wise youth, but one of the most frivolous, vain, and volatile persons about the court. He may be best described as one of the court



dandies; for he was only famous for his attention to dress, and for the extreme effeminacy of his appearance. His mind was almost empty of anything like common sense; and his tongue was little guilty of rational conversation. But he was always first to applaud the King's attempts at wit, by no means very sparkling; he praised his Sovereign's poetical effusions, never very brilliant, and was always at hand to aid, so far as he was able, in any of the King's clandestine intrigues; and so he was now enjoying his short sunshine of favour, which—let us hope few courtiers obtain at a similar price, or on equally slender merits.

The young exquisite leaned over the King's chair in an attitude of studied negligence, while his master was engaged giving instructions to M. Rouleaux his secretary. While the three were thus employed, an attendant entered and announced the arrival of M. le Abbé D'Aligne and his vicar, who were waiting his Majesty's pleasure.

"Let them enter," said the King, languidly. "M. Rouleaux, you may retire; but be at hand when we are disengaged. Mobile, you can remain with us; you have yet to show us those charming sketches by Mademoiselle St. Rocque. And I have no doubt there will be nothing in these priests' revelations that will at all offend even *your* finely strung nerves; unless, indeed, it be the sight of the Abbé, but you will soon recover from any disagreeable impressions that he may make upon you, when you have heard him speak; he is a charming talker—such a tone of voice—and then, he is almost as good a courtier as yourself."

"Ah, thire!" lisped the Duc, in a very affected style, which was his usual mode of speaking, "you're more than usual leniently ith pleathed to overlook my fault, and praithe my humble servithe; and if my nervouth thythem ith rather weak, your royal prethenthe is alwayth enough to give it borrowed strength. The report of the latht few hourth thertainly

have not improved my nerveth; but, being with you, thire, I shall be sure that the thaty and thupport of Franth ith thafe."

As he spoke, the dandy, who learned the greater part of his speeches from observing others, and thus contrived to acquit himself tolerably, lisped innocently in his majesty's face. The King smiled on his favourite, and motioned to him to seat himself. The Abbé and his companion were ushered in, both bowing profoundly.

"You are punctual, M. l'Abbé, for which accept our thanks. Pray be seated."

"Even to stand in the presence of my sovereign, and have his smile, speaking approval of my conduct, is far above my deserts; nevertheless, as my years are in the wane, my limbs somewhat feeble, and my story rather long, I shall gladly avail myself of your royal condescension."

Here the Abbé and his pretended Vicar sat down. Noticing, however, the presence of the Duc, the Priest seemed to hesitate about beginning to discuss his business. The King, perceiving his scruples, hastened to remove them.

"Never mind De Mobbille, Abbé; he is my particular friend. You may trust him as I do."

The Priest looked furtively at the Duc, and apparently satisfied that he was scarcely worth reckoning as a man, he proceeded to speak.

"The matters I would speak of are such that it were well at least no other ear for which they are not intended"—here he looked towards the door questioningly.

"Oh, you priests are so mysterious and suspicious," and the King laughed lightly. "But satisfy yourself. There are two doors, open them both, and see that there is no person within earshot; and, if you like, tell the officer in waiting that I am not to be interrupted while you are with me, upon any pretext whatsoever."

The Priest rose, and opened the doors; calling to the attendant,



who was lounging in the ante-chamber, he gave him the royal message, and then, having shut the outer door, and softly bolted it, he re-entered the King's presence, closing the inner one with well-feigned carelessness.

"And now, Abbé, let us have your news. Your friend—Vicar, I think you said?—was to tell me something."

"He so intends, sir."

"Proceed, then," said the King, looking blandly towards the Vicar.

"I shall do so, your majesty, to the best of my poor abilities, though somewhat agitated, as I am unaccustomed to the presence of my sovereign. I shall endeavour to be as plain and brief as possible. First, then, sir, you must know that discontent has existed for a considerable time among an important section of your army. Some of them, owing to the trifling employment they have had in your majesty's service, had requested permission to engage in foreign wars. You, sire, doubtless for wise reasons, refused. Again, an officer, whom your majesty punished for certain misdemeanours which were never publicly known, seems to have powerful friends, who have contrived to seize the proper moment for reviving his great services, and consequently renewing his popularity; the more easily since they hint that he has been unjustly confined."

"Was his name Raymond?" broke in the King, hurriedly.

"Yes, sire, that was the name. His cause was eagerly espoused by many of the soldiers; and they resolved as well to avenge his wrongs as to vent their own discontent, by plotting against your royal person——"

"Ha! it was true, then, about the conspiracy. Go on. But there were other persons also, who were led to make common cause with those discontented soldiers. Of the motives which induced one class of persons—the merchants—to join in the matter, I am somewhat ignorant, unless it were in some way connected with your

royal refusal to assist them in arming a fleet for the purposes of maritime discovery, with a view to the extension of commerce."

"I remember," broke in the King. "You begin to show various lights on the matter. Your pains in this affair shall not go unrewarded, M. le Vicaire Mobile," added he, "the clergy are of some use after all: they repay us for fostering them. Proceed, Monsieur."

The Abbé spoke:—

"Do not be so tedious, my good friend, or you will fatigue his majesty. Proceed at once to the beggars——"

"The Beggars!" exclaimed the King, in astonishment; "have *they* anything to do with this plot?"

"They have sire," replied the Abbé; "they take a very prominent part in it."

"They with to thell or pawn it," replied De Mobbille, who thought himself somewhat of a wit.

"By all means, M. l'Vicaire, go on with your story: let us hear how the beggars mean to assail us," and the King laughed anew.

"I am glad your majesty finds my revelations amusing, I shall continue with the greater pleasure. Your majesty must be aware that the beggars of this city alone are a formidable body; and they are united under a sort of sovereign of their own, who rules them with a sway fully as absolute as your majesty does France. Now, it has lately gone abroad that their community was looked upon by your majesty as a nuisance, and that you intended putting in force some very stringent laws for their suppression. These, your rumoured intentions, displeased them much, so they have organised themselves into a band of determined rebels, desiring to set up a republic, deeming that the only form of government under which they are sure to have their rights protected. They are to be led by their own chief. And, moreover, they are supplied with arms. These they robbed from one of your majesty's char-



tered vessels while the crew were carousing on shore. This was done on the very evening the ship arrived, before there was any time to unload."

"So it was they that robbed M. Roussay's ship, and not pirates, as we supposed. Really, good father, your story becomes more serious. Have you much more to say?"

"Not much, sire; but what I have is most important."

"I cannot understand it—how such ignorant, lowborn rascals could have dared to conspire! Surely the merchants must have promised them large bribes as an inducement."

"No, sire; that was not the moving principle; yet it is certain that of themselves they would scarcely have summoned courage to embark in such an undertaking, but for a certain nobleman who lived among them."

"What! a noble herd with beggars! Were it not that you are an aged priest, Monsieur, I would say you were mocking me. Who is he?"

"The old Count de Raymond."

"Raymond again! these Raymonds seem to have been born to be my curse."

"Well, I have heard him curse your Majesty; and if one were to believe his story, he has had cause."

"Stop, Monsieur; you must be mistaken; the old Count Raymond died in the Bastile prison."

"Your Majesty has been cruelly deceived; Raymond was placed in the fastest dungeon of the Bastile—at least, so they deemed it—but below that dungeon was the powder magazine, and from it a stair, at the foot of which was an iron door with a spring lock, and the key hung on the inside of the door. He contrived to loosen the hearthstone of his cell, by many weeks of cautiously conducted labour, and, lifting it, he descended through the aperture, and replaced the stone from below, so as to leave no trace of its having been lifted. When he went out at the door below, he pulled it too violently,

so as to let the spring lock act; and thus it was closed as usual. No person knew how he got out; so it was thought he had escaped by the chimney. From that same chamber, and in the very same manner did his son escape last night."

"Ha! you know about his son's escape too, do you? Your information on every point seems complete. But proceed. This old Count, where did he go?"

"He went to the beggars, and became one of them. They knew him as nothing else, but soon discovered the superiority of his mind, and gave ready and attentive ears to his counsels. I should mention that he had contrived a secret way of entering his own house. He slept in an apartment of the Hotel de Raymond, and left in the morning. The chamber he occupied soon got the reputation of being haunted, and was never entered save by Madame la Comtesse. In the meantime he was ever to be found among his adopted brethren. He advised them to conspire, and so they have done accordingly. This is the most of his history. Poor man! his destiny has been a hard one."

"Peace! are you also a traitor, that you should pity such a one."

"Sire, I cannot help pitying him, as I have ever done; for had I a son, the darling of his mother, imprisoned for nineteen years; had I a wife who died, her life worn away in pining for him, and yearning for me, as she did for her son and husband; and had I known that all was my Sovereign's doing, I would have hated you as he has done; and" (he rose from his seat) "I do so hate you, for I am he!"

The priestly cloak fell from his shoulders, and the tonsured wig was shaken from his head, and he stood in conscious virtue, in military attire, a sword by his side and the insignia of various orders on his breast, the picture of a brave man defying injustice.

Both the King and the Duc started started to their feet; M. D'Aligne seemed about to rise, but



immediately checking his surprise, he muttered, "More cards to play than I knew of."

"D'Aligne, do you, who so boast of your loyalty, bring traitors into our very presence?"

"Sire, I told you I would bring one who knew something of the conspiracy; and if I did a little deceive you at first, you have thereby learned all the better from his own lips what are the designs of his desperate confederates. I shall call the guards whom I have in waiting, if you think it necessary; but I should advise, not just yet, as there is no danger. If I have brought a dangerous man near you, I have also with me weapons of defence." And beneath his cloak he showed three pistols, one of which he gracefully presented to the King. "As for this traitor, I confessed him, and I induced him to come here, representing that he would get honour by his revelations; I know he has yet more to tell."

"Wretch!" cried the King to the aged nobleman, "as you hope for Heaven's mercy and ours, that we may give you the lightest doom we can with safety, have you told me all? if not, confess at once. Refuse, or I shall slay you on the spot."

Unmoved the old Count replied:—"Your Majesty has yet somewhat to hear, but it may be shortly told. There are other workers whom I have not yet mentioned; and I shall name them with honour, for they work well—I mean the priests."

"Priests! Abbé, is this true?"

"Sire," said the Abbé, humbly, "among all ranks—no matter how holy—treason may break out—for there was once a revolt in heaven—but, in this case, those few priests who have joined your Majesty's enemies, are, I believe, sincere in what they do; they deem it right; they would take care of the Church their only heritage."

"The Church, Abbé! Surely you could have told them, from your own experience, what we have

done for the Church; have we not always done our utmost to foster and protect her?"

"True, Sire; but they would rebut such arguments:—"Is it any palliation of wrong that it is done as quietly and smoothly as possible? Is it any defence of the system of slavery, that the slave is treated well? No; perhaps the very reverse: by brutal oppression he might be so broken as to wish for death, and thus end his earthly hardships; but by being dealt with kindly as a slave, he is led to exert himself to attain even greater happiness; he begins to suspect his right to freedom. To what purpose, then, could I argue, when they would tell me that formerly the Church was all-powerful, that, of late, French monarchs have put chains upon her—have curtailed, or made merely nominal, her temporal rights. 'Away!' they would say, 'you can be content and eat the bread of dependence if you choose; we cannot abide even in lenient slavery.' What could I reply; I must either agree and curse my King, or else dissemble and hold my tongue."

"Priest! but that I hold this weapon in my hand—a proof that you would give me wherewith to ensure my safety if I were in danger—by St. Louis, I would have thought you a traitor."

What answer M. D'Aligne might have made, we know not; for it so happened there was no need of reply. The King turned his eyes toward the old Count, and saw with amazement that he had divested himself of his military clothing, and now stood in his presence clad in rags.

"Your Majesty seems surprised; but, before you leave the world, I think it right you should know all. Behold, sire, the metamorphosis—your doing. I have been obliged to cast off the honours to which I was born, and which I was wont to wear, and now, see what you made me—an outcast, tattered mendicant; but I have passed my last day herding with squalor, and have been raised up this night for



your confusion—*I am the Beggar King !*"

"Wretch ! you shall beg for mercy, and receive none ; the contriver of so vile a plot deserves no pardon, but the vilest death ; but I shall not give it you now, for it must be with torture. Abbé, call the guards."

"Your Majesty had better get their plan of action first, had you not ?"

"Ask himself !" cried the old Count, somewhat fiercely ; "and he will tell you that when I am dead you will be none the better ; for it was a priest that contrived it, and he still lives."

"His name ?"

"The Abbé will tell you."

"D'Aligne, do you know ?"

"Yes, Sire ; but you can get that information from me at any time, but he has not yet told you the plan, the time, the exact method of intended action. Then M. le Duc here can call the guards, while I remain to see that nothing falls out amiss."

The Duc de Mobille shuddered ; he was evidently in no fit state to rise from his seat just then. He was frightfully pale.

"Speak, sir," said the King, more calmly ; "confess all—when and how did they intend to attack our government ?"

"They have fixed a night, sire—exactly at eleven by the bell of St. Magdalene's, they are all to assemble—merchants, soldiers, priests, beggars, in their various companies, and surround the palace. Some of the chiefs are to get admittance to your Majesty's apartments by force or fraud, and slay you ; the standard of liberty shall then be unfurled, and France proclaimed free from tyranny."

"Very well planned ; but who was to admit you ?"

"I have got in, your Majesty."

"Yes, but as a prisoner."

"Not after you, sire, are dead ; when you are so, two shots will be fired from the palace as a signal ; a light shall then blaze from your palace-roof, proclaiming the death of oppression ; oh ! it is well, beau-

tifully planned ; the priests are most accomplished plotters, and to-night is the night, and it has struck eleven !"

The King started wildly, and looked towards the door ; but the Abbé stood calmly between it and him.

"Fiend !" said the King ; "did you know all this ?"

"Yes, sire ; but I did not wish to mar my own work. You see the conspiracy is well planned, as my friend and your enemy just remarked. *I was the planner.*"

The King uttered a loud cry for help.

"Fear not," said the Abbé, in a mocking tone ; "no doubt the guards fill the antechamber, but the outer door is bolted."

"Devil !" cried the King, frantically, "I shall now use your own weapon upon yourself ;" and he essayed to fire the pistol, but it was of no use ; the Abbé had omitted the ceremony of loading it.

The Priest looked coolly towards the old Count.

"Prepare for your work ; I think we had better forestall the signal. It was to consist of two pistols—this is one of them." He raised his arm, and pointed the weapon toward the window ; but judgment seemed suddenly to have overtaken him, his hand shook, and he let fall the pistol ; the wall seemed to open, and the curtains were torn down, as Pierre de Raymond rushed in, followed by the old monk and three soldiers.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

DEATH TAKES TWO AWAY, BUT DIFFERENTLY THEY DIE.—THE OLD MONK ON MONARCHY.

"In time !" cried the Count. "Your majesty is safe. "I have earned a right to liberty ; but it is of no avail ; for I am poisoned by that villanous priest, because I would not join to conspire against your life and government ; and I have only a few moments to live. Say that I am free, sire ; declare me once more, as I am, your loyal



soldier; and then I shall die content."

The King, whose face had not yet recovered from his pallor, at the moment he thought himself lost, put down his hand, and raised from his knee the noble suppliant. He tried to speak, but after an effort or two, gave a smile and a wave of the hand, as much as to declare his present inability to utter his thanks. All stood painfully silent for some moments. At length his majesty found words:—

"Noble and unjustly persecuted man, my thanks are scarcely worth your taking; but since it was my hand that first struck you, and as you require me to speak, I here declare you free; and farther, I confess with shame that you have been *unjustly* imprisoned——"

"Confess nothing, sire, except to God: surely all your subjects know you are but a man, and may have erred; motives of mistaken policy have blinded you in what you did; but I desire not that my sovereign should ever humble himself to confess or to ask forgiveness of me. There is, however, one request (for I feel that my moments are numbered)—if your majesty cannot confer any lasting benefit upon me by your royal pardon, seeing my life is fast ebbing, you can to those who were unfortunately engaged in this night's rash enterprise. I know I am asking much; but I feel certain your majesty will give me this proof of your favour, so far as it may be consistent with your royal safety; for one and all I would beg mercy—even for the Abbé, who gave me that which is now quietly stealing away my life. Oh! sire, promise me that you will deal leniently with them."

"All but the Priest. Whoever may have been found participating in this foul plot, I promise to treat with clemency; but that fiend cannot be loose on the world again. Guards, let him be instantly secured."

"God has saved your majesty a painful duty," said the old Monk

of St. John, who was bending tenderly over the Abbé's quivering form; "He has laid His hand on him; I fear he is dying."

The attention of the whole group was thus called away, from the Count, to M. D'Aligne, who lay almost motionless, gasping for breath. He murmured, and all listened breathlessly.

"I have failed; but it is the first time—yet I cannot live to blot out the disgrace. De Raymond, you are avenged; some of that poison I gave you, has fallen to my own share—and you see I die before you." He ground his teeth. "I could have been content had my work been done."

"Hush, my lord Abbot," said the aged monk; "utter not such blasphemies. Your time is short; let it be well used. If with misguided efforts you have striven to dethrone the Lord's anointed, there is One who was himself despised and slain by His own subjects, and yet He forgave them——"

"Waste not your time, old man; you may go to the Count; he needs you. Do not speak vain and useless things about forgiveness to me. Have I lived for more than sixty years, and the half of that time been busy about what you call crimes, to whine and whimper at my latter end? Away!"

"Alas! my son, give me leave to attend you, at least to pray for you. Pray for yourself. What if your life has been stained by some foul actions, though it should have embraced every villany that men have a name for. God has a fountain that can wash them white, you know as well as I. It was for sin that our blessed Redeemer shed His blood; and the first He took with Him to glory was a malefactor."

"It is in vain, good priest"—the Abbé spoke with some softness in his tone—"I believe you sincere; but my work is marred, and how can I listen to your well-meant homily with patience?"

"Pray, then, my son."

"Had I thought prayer would avail me anything, I would have



prayed for a few moments' strength, and might have died with honour yet—but fate has thwarted me." His utterance was growing feeble, but he made convulsive efforts to speak. The Count started forward, and cried out, "At least acknowledge the King, and beg his forgiveness."

"The King! well, I will not curse him; but let him not cease to tremble because I die; there are others to fill my place. I have sowed the seed, and it shall take firm root in France. De Raymond, and you, old father, farewell—my dark soul, I fear, can never meet yours." He then threw up his arms; and his features became fearfully contorted. He uttered a groan or two, and was silent. He could plot no more in France.

"Heaven have mercy on his soul!" said the King.

"Amen!" said the Monk, in a dreamy tone, as if he spoke in charity, but not in hope.

A groan interrupted the solemn scene; it came from the Count, as we must still call him. He had felt sick, and sank down into the nearest seat he could find, which happened to be the King's. His Majesty immediately turned round to see what was the matter, and the attention of all in the apartment was turned in the same direction. They saw him who had saved the King from death, himself evidently struggling with the grizzly King. His face was frightfully pale; and he was beginning to show the same symptoms as the Abbé had done. He was violently convulsed. There was one who rushed forward heedless of all, and gently took hold of the sufferer's hand. He, turning to see who it was that held him so tenderly, seemed to start in the midst of his pain, as he recognised the features of the Beggar. But the military cloak, which he had hastily resumed on the entrance of the rescuing party, was adorned on the left breast with the armorial bearings of the De Raymond family, wrought in golden thread. The eyes of the expiring noble

seemed to take in all we have described, and the quickening of the mental powers, which is often remarked at the point of death, made him apparently comprehend the whole and require no explanation.

"I see it now," he said, speaking with difficulty, "you told me I had something more to live for than I wot of. Father, it is too late."

"Oh! Pierre, my son, I thought to have made myself known to you after we had—but why lament what we cannot mend? You were always a noble boy; and at least you have had a noble end. I have dreamed of you restored to freedom—" He stopped short, leaning down his face on his son's bosom, while his frame shook with grief.

The old Monk laid his hand gently upon his shoulder. "He is about to enter, I trust, on a life of happiness far surpassing even the sweets of earthly freedom. His spirit is being released from its fleshly prison, to join, as I doubt not, that of his sainted mother gone thither not long before him. Let us pray for his soul that it may pass peaceably away."

The Count struggled, as if about to speak. Then opening his eyes, and gazing wildly about him, he murmured in broken sentences:—"Yes, mother, I have kept your commands, I have served the King." For a moment an expression of bitterness passed over his face. The King approached and took his hand. "You do not hate me, most loyal of all my soldiers, say that you do not hate me?"

"Forbear, your Majesty," said the Priest; "he is too weak to speak; he hates no one."

Just dying, he heard, and made a desperate effort to speak; his father raised his sorrowful face to look upon him; and at length he succeeded in almost shouting out, "God bless the King!" and he lifted his arm to wave it in triumph. His last struggle seemed over, his whole body quivered slightly; there was no other token that he lived. The Priest knelt down and prayed for his soul. It was just passing



away. A lovely smile overspread his countenance ; and in a very low tone he breathed the thoughts that last occupied his mind, one of each world :—" Mother, I come,—Lucille, adieu !"

" " Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord !" said the aged Priest ; and he ceased speaking, abruptly, and bowed his head in genuine grief, for he had loved young De Raymond ever since he had beheld his filial piety at the death-bed of his mother.

The old Count kissed the lifeless remains of what had once been so fair a son, and rose slowly and sternly to his feet, and placing himself before the King, seemed about to address him ; but he checked himself, for the King's eyes were fixed on the motionless corpse, still faintly smiling as before death, and a tear rolled down the royal cheek. No wonder ; he looked at the wreck before him, and felt that it was his own doing.

" Sire," at length said the afflicted father, in a hollow voice, " if I kneeled to you it would seem that I wished to sue for mercy, therefore I shall not kneel ; but I declare most solemnly that it was chiefly on my son's account, I joined in this treasonable plot. I would not do so now, for I have no son to revenge. And, besides, he has taught me by his loyal actions, that it was wrong to use so foul means, even to accomplish so desirable an end as his deliverance, and my own restoration to the honours of my family. I feel it was wrong, I say ; and see—he pointed to his son's body — " how God has punished me. I have nothing more to say, nothing to live for. You have made the world a wilderness for me. Your guards can seize me ; I will make no-resistance."

" M. le Comte de Raymond, you heard me promise to your son that I would pardon all the Conspirators, and even on that ground you are pardoned ; but, we need not seek so low ground as that. Did you not hear me confess that he had been unjustly imprisoned ? Surely then his father was blameless in

seeking to avenge him. I beseech you to accept this pardon, however worthless it is to you, and return to your honours. I do not ask you to *forgive* me, but at least think as kindly of me as you can."

His Majesty then turned to the guards and others present and said—" Gentlemen, for your services to-night I shall consider at some fitter time, how I can best repay you. Regarding this night's work, I think it were best for us all that secrecy be preserved. By that strange entrance in the wall you can retire as you came in, taking with you the bodies of the young nobleman, and of the Abbe. Account for their deaths as naturally as you can with truth, reserving of course anything like details. As there has been no signal given, I presume by this time all other Conspirators must have given the matter up as lost."

At the mention of the Abbé, M. le Duc turned uneasily towards the ghastly corpse, and said to the guards—

" Take away that body, some of you—I hate the sight of the dog ;" and he lifted his foot as if to spurn it. But the Priest seeing this ran in between him and the dead.

" Off, sycophant !" said he, affect not to spurn *him* in death, in whose presence when alive you, and many better, were content to tremble. When he died to-night a great man fell, would I could say a *good* one." Then turning to the others—" It were best for us to retire as his Majesty suggests, leaving no trace of what has happened ; but before we do so, let me here (as it may be most impressive), read you, my fellow-subjects, a lesson on what has this night befallen. That monarchy is the form of government which, as being of more permanent stability than any other, the Almighty first suggested to mankind, few will deny. He has even caused it to prosper, and extend more than any other, which is sufficient evidence of His approval. He has vindicated it this night. Let me show you for a few moments the unity of this form



of government with the other operations of the Omnipotent mind. The government of the universe may be called a moral *pyramid*. First, at the broad base, we, the lesser magistrates of cities and towns, over whom again are placed provincial governors, who, again, are collected under their respective sovereigns. The astronomers inform us that the orbs we see in the heavens are also worlds, in each of which we may reasonably suppose some similar arrangement. And to what intent has the Most High so many angels but to perform His will, one presiding over each world, as its arch-ruler, the unknown and unsuspected governor of kings. Of the world, some the Guardian Angel once betrayed his trust, hence Adam fell; and above all these, on His Eternal Throne sits the Lord of the Universe, upholding the vast scheme, and out of all His creatures' actions—even their very wrong-doings—working out a glorious restitution.

"If any unhappy soul should ever for its sins be so far left to itself, as to rise up against its lawful Ruler, they shall be cast away of the Omnipotent until they repent. At length, wearied of their own madly set-up government, they shall call upon him in their day of trouble, and he will send them a king again, of the very royal line they rejected.

"And you, sire, suffer an old man to speak, who has walked through the world, and beheld its doings (often very sorrowfully), for nearly four score years and five. To you, sire, I say—behold your deliverance, and at the same time how distinct, though lenient, your punishment. Your injustice was punished in the fear which took hold on you, as your throne tottered, and you knew not, nor hoped for a deliverer, yet had God prepared one whom he scarcely

permitted to live long enough to receive your thanks. Mysterious to us such a dispensation, but we must feel it was wise. He saw him when his soul—which himself had cleansed—seemed most beautiful, and said to his angels, 'bring him up hither.' And he is crowned a king in Heaven, while you are only one on earth. In your deliverance you were both admonished and chastised. Your vanity and confidence in yourself and your government was shown to be falsely based. Your loyal subjects (and you have many, sire), were, through ignorance of your peril, prevented from aiding in your rescue; but you owe your safety—and can never attempt to repay the debt—to one whom your own injustice made a *Prisoner*!

"I forbear, sire, for I would not be tedious; we will take our leave. I crave pardon if I have seemed rudely to reprove. I have spoken in all loyalty. May the Monarch of the Universe bless your Majesty. May He grant you Heavenly wisdom, that you may rule well as in His sight, and when it shall be His holy pleasure to call you hence, you may exchange your earthly for a heavenly crown."

As he ceased, the King bowed humbly before him, acknowledging that what had been spoken was truth. One by one the guards retired by the same aperture that gave them admission. The Monk went last, supporting the head of the Abbé, and the King closed the door behind them.

His Majesty and the Duc de Mobille were left alone; and no trace of any violence remained, except the torn drapery which scarcely needed to be accounted for. *Who could have known that there had been any Conspiracy?*



## JOHN LAW, OF LAURISTON:

AND ACCOUNT OF THE CELEBRATED BUBBLE, KNOWN AS "THE MISSISSIPPI SYSTEM."

[Some account of the "Mississippi system," that surprising speculation which, in the early part of the last century, turned the heads of all the inhabitants of Paris, which converted the very streets into one vast Stock Exchange, which elevated footmen to fortune, and reduced millionaires to beggary, will, we think, be acceptable to our readers, and, with this purpose, we lay before them a short sketch of the remarkable man who first devised that gigantic undertaking, which, if suffered to remain under Mr. Law's management, instead of being seized upon by the despotic government of France, would, in all probability, have enriched the nation, instead of plunging it into bankruptcy.]

JOHN LAW was born at Edinburgh, in the year 1671. His father, William Law, was great-grandson of James Law, archbishop of Glasgow from 1615 to 1632, and second son of James Law, of Brunton, in Fife, by Margaret, daughter of Sir John Preston, of Preston Hall, Bart. William Law followed the profession of a goldsmith (a business then partaking more of the nature of a banker than that to which the name is now restricted) with such success as to enable him to purchase the lands of Lauriston and Randleston, containing about a hundred and eighty Scottish acres.

John Law, the subject of this memoir, was educated at Edinburgh, and made himself perfectly acquainted with arithmetic, geometry, and algebra. He likewise bestowed much time and labour in acquiring a knowledge of political economy.

He lost his father before he was fourteen, and, falling into dissipated habits, he soon involved himself so deeply, that, by deed, dated 6th February, 1792, he conveyed the estate of Lauriston to his mother, who paid his debts, and, by her prudent management, freeing the estate from every burden, she executed entails, in

order to continue the property in the family.

In London, whither Mr. Law now removed, his superior personal beauty, ready wit, and engaging manners, aided by his propensity to deep play, procured him admittance into some of the first circles. He had the reputation of being extremely fortunate in affairs of gallantry. One of these was attended with disastrous consequences. A Mrs. Lawrence was the occasion of a quarrel between him and a Mr. Edward Wilson, which led to a meeting in Bloomsbury Square, when Mr. Wilson was killed on the spot, on the 9th of April, 1694.

Mr. Law was immediately seized and tried for murder at the Old Bailey, and received sentence of death, 20th April, 1794. But it not clearly appearing that the meeting was premeditated, his case was submitted to the crown, and he obtained a pardon; but an appeal being lodged by deceased's brother, he was detained in prison. This, appeal was heard in Trinity term, 1694; several objections were raised by Mr. Law which were overruled. But whilst this was pending, Mr. Law effected his escape and fled to the Continent. It is said that he officiated for some time as secretary to the British Resident in Holland, but the next certain information we have of him is at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when he published "Proposals and Reasons for constituting a Council of Trade" at Edinburgh; but the scheme met with no encouragement. This publication had the effect of introducing him to several of the principal personages of the country. Relying on their support, he offered in 1705 a scheme to Parliament for introducing the circulation of paper



money in order to obviate the difficulties which Scotland was at that time labouring under, and he published another work, "Money and Trade considered, with a Proposal for supplying the Nation with Money," explanatory of his scheme; but although he was supported by the whole court party and that called the Squadrone, (a few monied men excepted,) yet his plan was rejected; the House passing a resolution "that to establish any kind of paper credit, so as to oblige it to pass, was an improper expedient for the nation."\*

Mr. Law now resolved to try his fortune abroad, where he addicted himself to all sorts of games, and by his skill in calculation was astonishingly successful. He visited many of the principal cities in France, Germany, and Italy. He made three expeditions to Paris, where he associated with the highest circles, and on his first visit he gained an introduction to the Duc de Chartres, afterwards Duc d'Orleans and Regent of France; on his second visit, he proposed a scheme to the king, (through Desmarets, the comptroller general) for reducing the national debt, but Louis, inquiring whether he was a catholic, and being answered in the negative, he declared he would have nothing to do with a heretic, and dismissed the scheme.

In 1714 Mr. Law visited Paris for the third time, bringing with him about £110,000, the profits of his various rambles. Louis XIV. dying shortly after Mr. Law's arrival at Paris, the Duc d'Orleans assumed the reins of government, under the title of Regent. He, being fully aware of Mr. Law's superior abilities, and their disposition with respect to pleasure coinciding, he shortly afterwards appointed that gentleman one of the counsellors of state.

The situation of affairs in France was at this time dreadful; the long wars of Louis had loaded the

people with a national debt of frightful magnitude, and they were also burdened with ruinous taxes imposed to pay the interest of the debt. All industry was thus checked, trade almost annihilated, manufactures, commerce, and navigation, had almost ceased. The merchant and trader were reduced to beggary, and the artificer was compelled to leave the kingdom for want of employment.

In this state of affairs a national bankruptcy was actually proposed in council, but it was rejected by the regent, who adopted the plan of establishing a commission, or visa, to inquire into the claims of the state creditors.

By this commission the national debt was at last put into a kind of order, and the amount reduced to somewhat more than 2000 millions of livres, which at 28 livres to the marc of standard silver (two pounds sterling,) the then denomination of the specie in France, made above 142 millions sterling. Of this sum, 1750 millions of livres were established upon particular funds at the rate of 4 per cent, and for the remaining 250 millions the creditors obtained billets d'état, as they were called, bearing interest also at 4 per cent; making altogether 80 millions of interest per annum, which from the distressed situation of the kingdom was very irregularly paid; and after doing that, there hardly remained, out of an ill-collected revenue, a sum sufficient to defray the necessary expense of the civil government.

Law, perceiving this calamitous state of affairs, determined to exert himself in order to rectify the evil. The most efficacious mode he judged to be, the establishment of a well-regulated paper credit; but as this matter was little understood in France, he translated into the French his publication on Money and Trade, and explained its principles in a series of Letters addressed to the Duc d'Orleans, and in two Memorials presented to that prince. In these he strongly inculcates his favourite maxim that the power and prosperity of a

\* Smollett mentions this circumstance, and adds, that Dr. Hugh Chamberlyne also proposed a scheme of the same nature, which was also rejected.



state increase in proportion to the quantity of money circulating therein; and after asserting that even the richest nations have not specie sufficient to afford full employment to all their inhabitants, and to carry their trade to the height of which it is capable,\* he expatiated on the advantages of paper credit for supplying that defect. In support of this proposition, he instances the vast benefits accruing to England and Holland from the banks of England and Amsterdam, and adduces a variety of arguments to prove that the setting up of an establishment of a similiar nature, but on an improved plan, at Paris, would be accompanied with beneficial results.

Law now proposed to open a national bank, but his scheme was rejected, because the then present conjuncture was not thought favourable.

Law then requested permission to open a private bank in his house, in La Place de Louis le Grand. This bank was established by letters patent, dated 2nd and 20th May, 1716, containing the following regulations:—

The stock of the bank to consist of 1,200 actions or shares of 1,000 crowns, or 5,000 livres each; the denomination being then fixed by law, at 40 livres the marc, consequently each share was worth £250, and the whole stock £300,000 sterling.

All persons whatsoever to be at liberty to subscribe for as many shares as they pleased, and it was declared that the bank securities belonging to, as well as the money lodged in it, by foreigners, should not be subject to any confiscation or attachment whatsoever, even in case of war with the nations to

which the proprietors respectively belonged.

All questions to be decided by vote.

The accounts to be balanced twice every year at stated periods.

Two general courts to be held yearly, in which the state of the company's affairs were to be discussed, and their dividends settled.

The treasurers never to have more than 200,000 crowns, nor any of the cashiers more than 20,000 in hand at a time.

The bank not to undertake any sort of commerce, nor to charge itself with the execution of any commissions.

The notes to be all payable at sight, and no money allowed to be borrowed by the bank.

Various other regulations of minor importance were added.

This association was carried on under the firm of The General Bank of Law & Co.; and Law and his brother were the principal proprietors.

The bank opened under very favourable auspices, it being known that they enjoyed the favour of the regent, and a high idea of their stability was entertained from the discourse which Law unceasingly held, that a banker merited the punishment of death, if he issued notes or bills of exchange without having their effective value in his repositories. But what most attracted the public confidence, was the security their notes provided against the arbitrary practice of varying the standard of the coin at the will of the monarch; an unjustifiable measure frequently put in execution by the French government, to the infinite prejudice of debtors and creditors, particularly at the general coinages in 1709 and 1716, by the former of which the king gained  $23\frac{1}{3}$  per cent, and by the latter 20 per cent upon the whole specie of the kingdom. The terms in which the notes of the general bank were couched, viz:—  
“The Bank promises to pay to the Bearer, at sight, the sum of — crowns, in coin of the weight and standard of this day, (of the date

\* Another of Law's arguments was that gold merely received its value from being employed as a circulating medium, and that in effect it was indifferent whether gold or paper is employed, forgetting that gold has an intrinsic value. — *Cours d'Economie Politique de M. Henri Storch, Paris, 1823.*



of each note,) value received," effectually guarded against this contingency. On this account, as well as from the quickness and punctuality of the payments, and the orders given to the officers of the revenue in all parts of the kingdom to receive the paper without discount, in payment of taxes, the notes of the general bank soon passed current for 1 per cent more than the coin itself. This bank produced the most beneficial results on the industry and trade of the nation; the taxes and royal revenues being by means of the notes remitted to the capital at little expense, and without draining the country of specie. Foreigners who had hitherto been very cautious of dealing with the French, now began to interest themselves deeply in this new bank, so that the balance of exchange with England and Holland soon rose to the rate of 4 and 5 per cent in favour of Paris. The bank subsisted in high credit, to the no small profit of the proprietors, till the close of the year 1718, when the Duke of Orleans took it into the hands of government, as at first proposed. The proprietors petitioned to be allowed to continue the general bank at the same time that the royal bank should be set on foot, but their request was refused.

Thus the bank, being placed in the king's hands, departed from the principles of private and mercantile credit upon which Mr. Law had originally fixed it, and proceeded upon those of public credit, which, in an absolute monarchy, is no other than that of the sovereign, and consequently cannot be depended upon. To add to the evil, the tenor of the notes was changed, and ran thus:—"The Bank promises to pay the Bearer at sight — livres in silver coin, value received," thus subjecting the notes to the variations in the value of specie. It had, however, no effect on the credit of the bank. Of these notes,\* there were to the amount

\* The notes were of four different denominations—viz., 10,000, 1,000, 100, and 10 livres.

of one thousand millions of livres fabricated betwixt the 5th January and 29 December, 1719. In February, 1720, the royal bank was incorporated with the company of the Indies; and from that incorporation to the 1st of May following 1,696,400,000 livres were fabricated, making together 2,696,400,000 livres in paper money, of which vast sum 2,235,083,590 livres were in circulation on the 29th May, 1720, when the bank stopped payment.

After the establishment of the general bank, Mr. Law began to lay open the plan of that great and stupendous project he had long meditated, known by the name of the "Mississippi system," which for a while turned the heads of the French, and attracted the attention of all Europe. The scheme was no less than the vesting of the whole privileges, effects, and possessions of all the foreign trading companies, the great farms, the mint, the general receipt of the king's revenues, and the management and property of the bank, in one great company, who, thus having in their hands all the trade, taxes, and royal revenues, might be enabled to multiply the notes of the bank to any extent they pleased, doubling, or even trebling at will the circulating cash of the kingdom, and, by the immensity of their funds, possessed of a power to carry the foreign trade and the culture of the colonies to a height altogether impracticable by any other means. The outlines of this plan, being laid before the regent, met, it would seem, with the approbation of that prince, as measures were taken for the establishment of the proposed company, and directions issued for making the requisite grants to enable them to commence their operations.

In pursuance of the plan devised by Mr. Law, a commercial company was erected in 1717, by letters patent, under the name of the Company of the West. The whole province of Louisiana was granted to them; and this country being watered throughout its whole ex-



tent by the great river Mississippi, the subsequent operations of the company came to be known under the general title of THE MISSISSIPPI SYSTEM. This company was divided into 200,000 actions, or shares, of 500 livres each, to be paid in *billets d'etat*. These were in such discredit, from the bad payment of interest, that 500 livres nominal value were not worth more than 150 or 160 in the market. The company took them at their full value, and became creditors of the King to the amount of 100 millions of livres, the interest of which was fixed at four per cent.

Of this Company of the West, Mr. Law (who had now advanced so high in the Regent's favour, that the whole ministerial power was reckoned to be divided among him, the Abbé Du Bois, minister for foreign affairs, and M. d'Argenson, keeper of the seals,) was named director-general. The actions were eagerly sought after: Louisiana having been represented as a region abounding in gold and silver, of a fertile soil, capable of every sort of cultivation. Such was the rage for speculation, that the unimproved parts of that country were sold for 30,000 livres the square league, at which rate many purchased to the extent of 600,000 livres; vigorous preparations were made for fitting out vessels, to transport thither labourers and workmen of every kind: and the demand for *billets d'etat*, in order to purchase shares, occasioned the former to rise to their full nominal value.

The farm of tobacco, the charter and effects of the Senegal Company, and the exclusive privilege of trading to the East Indies, China, and the South Seas, together with the possessions and effects belonging to the China and India Companies, were made over to the new company, on condition of paying the lawful debts of these companies, now dissolved. The Company of the West assumed on this occasion the title of the Company of the Indies. Fifty thousand new shares were ordered to be constituted,

rated at 550 livres each, payable in coin, to be employed partly in satisfying the creditors of the old companies, and partly in building vessels, and in other preparations for carrying on the trade. The price of actions quickly rose to one thousand livres; the hopes of the public being raised by the favourable prospects of possessing a very lucrative branch of commerce.

On the 25th July, 1719, the Mint was made over to the Company of the Indies, for a consideration of fifty millions of livres, to be paid to the King within fifteen months; and fifty thousand new shares, rated at one thousand livres each, were directed to be issued, in order to raise that sum. On the 27th August following, the Regent took the great farms out of the hands of the farmers-general, and made over the lease to the Company of the Indies, on their agreeing to pay 3,500,000 livres additional rent for them; thus relieving the people from the exactions of that powerful body, under whose management the taxes became quite intolerable,—not so much from their own weight as the oppressive mode of levying them. On the 31st of the same month, the Company obtained the general receipt of other branches of the King's revenue. When they had acquired all these grants, and had thus concentrated in themselves the whole foreign trade and possessions of France, and the collection and management of all the royal revenues of that kingdom, they promised an annual dividend of two hundred livres on every share; the consequence of which was, that the price of actions instantly rose in the market to five thousand livres; the public ran upon the last creation of fifty thousand with such eagerness, that nearly double the requisite sum was subscribed for, and the greatest interest was exerted, and every stratagem put into practice, to secure places in that subscription.

The Company now came under an obligation to lend the King, in order that he might pay off his creditors, the sum of 1500 millions



of livres, at the rate of three per cent. per annum; and to this rate the interest of the 100 millions formerly lent to his Majesty (in *billets d'état*) was also reduced: the King, consequently, had to pay them in all forty-eight millions a year. To raise this sum of 1500 millions, there were, in the months of September and October, 1719, 300,000 new actions created; the subscriptions for which were fixed at five thousand livres each. The actions were thus brought to the full number of 600,000 (but 24,000 more were fabricated on the 4th of October, 1719, by the private orders of the Regent, but afterwards suppressed): and, to answer the dividends upon these, the Company had, according to some, the following annual revenue, viz:—

Interest paid by the King to the Company . . . .	48,000,000
Profits upon the Great Farms . . .	15,000,000
Ditto upon the Mint . . .	4,000,000
Ditto upon the Farm of Tobacco . . .	2,000,000
Ditto upon the general receipt of Taxes . . .	1,500,000
Ditto upon their Trade . . . . .	10,000,000

—making a total of 80,500,000 livres, opened to be improved by the extension of their commerce abroad, and by a good administration at home. Other writers on the subject, however, computed the annual revenue of this great Company at no less than 131 millions, viz., 48 millions from the King,

39 millions profits upon the Farms, the Mint, and the receipt of Taxes; and

44 millions profits upon their Trade:

in which case they could well afford a dividend of even more than two hundred livres on every share.

The cupidity which these prospects of immense profit in some measure, but principally the prodigious fortunes acquired by the original proprietors, exhibited among all ranks, was such as no nation

had ever witnessed. A universal infatuation for the acquisition of shares in the India Company now seemed to occupy the whole kingdom, from the lowest of the people up to magistrates, prelates, and princes. This infatuation, of which at the present day we can scarcely form a conception, increased in proportion to the difficulty of succeeding in that view; for the whole 300,000 actions of the last fabrication being, by a particular agreement, kept up, in order to be sold to the Regent (who had also got possession of 100,000 of those formerly issued), no more than 200,000 remained in the hands of the public; and only a part thereof, quite inadequate to the demand, was now brought to market. The frenzy prevailed so far, that the whole nation, clergy and laity, peers and plebeians, statesmen, princes, nay, even ladies, who had or could procure money for that purpose, turned stock-jobbers, outbidding each other with such avidity that, in November, 1719, the price of shares rose, after some fluctuations, to above ten thousand livres each; more than sixty times the sum they originally sold for, when the discredit of the *billets d'état* is taken into the account.

M. de la Mothe and the Abbé Terasson, two of the ablest scholars in France, conversing together on the madness of the Mississippi adventurers, congratulated themselves on their superiority over all weaknesses of that nature, and indulged themselves in ridiculing the folly of the votaries of the fickle goddess. But it so happened that they met, not long afterwards, face to face in the rue Quinquempoix:\* at first they endeavoured to avoid each other, but, finding that impracticable, put the best look possible on the matter, rallied each other, and separated in order to make the most advantageous bargains they could. The courtiers, according to their usual custom of following implicitly the

\* A little dirty street where the stock-jobbing was carried on.



royal example, engaged so deeply in this business, that it was said five persons of that description (the Maréchaux de Villeroi and de Villars, the Ducs de St. Simon and de la Rochefoucault, and the Chancellor) had kept free from the contagion. The Maréchal Duc de Richelieu relates that those who did not embark in the Mississippi scheme were looked upon as no better than cowards or fools.

In consequence of a murder which took place in the rue Quinquempoix, the stock-market was first transferred to the Place Vendôme, and business was carried on in tents pitched in the area to the gardens of the Hotel Soissons; where and afterwards business was transacted in tents pitched among the trees, which tents the brokers were obliged to make use of.

The situation of France in November, 1719, is thus described by a contemporary writer:—"The bank-notes were just so much real value which credit and confidence had created in favour of the state. Upon their appearance, Plenty immediately displayed herself through all the towns and all the country; she relieved our citizens and labourers from the oppression of debts which indigence had obliged them to contract; she enabled the King to liberate himself from great part of his debts, and to make over to his subjects more than fifty-two millions of livres of taxes, which had been imposed in the years preceding 1719; and more than thirty-five millions of other duties extinguished during the regency. This plenty sunk the rate of interest; crushed the usurer; carried the value of lands up to eighty or one hundred years' purchase; raised up stately edifices, both in town and country; repaired the old houses which were falling to ruin; improved the soil; gave an additional relish to every fruit produced by the earth. Plenty recalled those citizens whom misery had forced to seek their livelihood abroad. In a word, riches flowed in from every quarter: gold, silver, precious stones, ornaments of every kind

which contribute to luxury and magnificence, came to us from every country in Europe. Whether these prodigies or marvellous effects were produced by art, by confidence, by fear, or by whim, they produced all these realities which the ancient administration never could have produced. Thus far the system has produced nothing but good: everything was commendable and worthy of admiration."\*

Mr. Law was perfectly idolised by the people, who looked upon him in no way inferior to the King and Regent; the mob being accustomed to cry out, whenever he appeared in public, "Long live Mr. Law!" He made a public profession (with his son and daughter) of his conversion to the catholic faith, and, every obstacle being now removed, he was, on the 5th January, 1720, declared comptroller-general of the finances of France.

Thus the admiring world beheld an obscure foreigner, by the mere force of extraordinary genius and abilities, rise, in the course of a few months, from a private condition to the high station of prime minister to the politest nation of Europe, which he governed for some time with almost absolute power. It must be mentioned to his honour that he voluntarily gave up the whole perquisites, as well as the salary annexed to his office; and he was so little addicted to luxury and extravagance as to take care that the most regular order and strictest propriety should be observed in the management of his household; while at the same time his dress was remarkable for its plainness and simplicity.

The credit of the bank was now at its acmé, but fears began to be entertained by those behind the scenes. A constant drain of specie from the bank was going on, caused chiefly by hoarding and remittances abroad, and the immense quantities of plate manufactured for the rich Mississippians. Several edicts were in consequence issued, limiting the

\* *Reflexions Politiques sur la Finance et le Commerce.* Par M. du Tot, tom ii. 330.



payment in specie; and at length a decree was issued, on the 27th of February, 1720, prohibiting individuals from having in their possession more than five hundred livres in specie. The Royal Bank and the Company were incorporated together, and the issue of notes was pushed to an enormous extent, for the payment of the public creditors. On the 1st of May, 1720, notes to the amount of 2000 millions of livres were in circulation, whilst the whole specie in the kingdom, at the equitable rate of sixty-five livres to the marc, was estimated at only one-half that amount. It was now debated in council whether it were not necessary to equalise the value of the notes and the specie; a proposal which was strongly opposed by Law, who urged the absolute necessity of suffering matters to remain as they were. Although he well knew that the issue had been excessive, and far beyond what a healthy state of circulation required, he knew that the credit of the Bank and Company was well founded, and that any interference would ruin everything. His advice was disregarded. An arbitrary and dishonest edict was issued, after a long discussion upon the question whether the shares should be depreciated, or the nominal value of the coin raised. The shares of the Company were reduced from 8000 livres to 5000 livres, by gradations of 500 livres a month; and the bank notes, by like gradations, were reduced one-half.

It is needless to say what was the effect of this measure, which was a barefaced robbery of the people, and was particularly iniquitous. Popular commotions ensued, which were with difficulty quieted. The Bank stopped payment, under pretence of examining into certain alleged frauds. Various efforts were made to restore public confidence, but in vain. At length the affairs of the Bank and Company were arranged, but in such a manner as to cause the ruin of thousands, and to relieve the king from about forty millions of livres due to public creditors.

Such was the end of the Mississippi system, which was a great attempt, originated by a powerful mind, to establish a sound paper currency in France, and which, but for the arbitrary interference of a despotic government, would have made Law, its author, to be regarded as a benefactor, instead of being cursed as a destroyer.

The great farms, Mint, and Royal Revenues, were taken out of the hands of the Company, who were thus reduced to a mere trading body, and continued to flourish for a long time.

The people being extremely irritated against Law, attributing to him all the evils they suffered, he obtained permission from the Regent to quit France, and left the kingdom on the 14th or 15th of December, 1720, accompanied by his son. Lady Catherine Law remained in Paris, under the protection of the Duke de Vendôme, until she had discharged all her husband's debts. After travelling through Italy he went to England, where he was very well received. For some time he entertained hopes of recovering part of the property which he possessed in France, both in land and in shares of the India Company; but the whole was confiscated, and he never recovered any part of it. The Regent entertained an idea at one time of recalling Law, but at his death this scheme was no longer thought of, and the pension which Law had hitherto received from the French Government was no longer paid. He was thus thrown into such difficulties that he determined to leave England, which he accordingly did in 1725, and fixed his residence at Venice, where he died, in a state but little removed from indigence on the 21st of May, 1759, in the fifty-eighth year of his age; and he lies buried in one of the churches in that city, where a monument to his memory is yet to be seen.

Mr. Law married Lady Catherine Knollys, third daughter of Nicholas, Earl of Banbury, who died in 1747, by whom he had a son, John Law, a cornet of the regiment of Nassau



Friesland, who died of the small pox at Maestricht, February, 1734, aged about thirty-one, and unmarried; and a daughter, Mary Catherine Law, who married, 4th July, 1734, her first cousin, William

Viscount Wallingford, major in the first troop of Horse Guards, eldest son of Charles, fourth Earl of Banbury. She died a widow, at her house in Park-street, Grosvenor Square, 14th October, 1790.

### MAY.

I LEAN above the casement, and behold  
 Little grasses spangled by the fallen showers;  
 I breathe the freshness of the garden mould,  
 And dainty odours from the drooping flowers.  
 The birds sit peering from the cottage-eaves,  
 Or, taking wing unto their favourite bowers,  
 Scatter bright rain-drops from the moistened leaves.  
 And yonder little Effie takes her way,  
 With blossoms braided in her curls of gold,  
 Singing sweet praises of sweet floral May.  
 I hear the bleating of the distant fold,  
 The lowing of sleek kine; and, in my joy,  
 The man is dwindled to a rosy boy,  
 Laughing in chorus with the laughing hours.

ROBERT HANNAY.



## A WOMAN'S MIRACLE.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE VEIL RAISED.

It was but a few minutes after Mrs. Sargood had taken her leave of Sir William for the night, and had driven away in her carriage to her villa, escorted, of course, by her prospective husband, that Amy and Eustace returned from the school-house. Sir William himself received them at the doorway of his princely mansion. To see them together cheered his spirits up, and out of the abundance of his affectionate heart, he exclaimed,—

"This is a pleasure! Oh, my children! to see you together again is a sight that makes amends for all the sorrow I have felt in your long separation. Ah, Eustace! I thought I was right."

"In what, sir?"

"That the absence of my Amy was the cause of your confounded gloom. See how pleased you look now that you have her by your side! But come in, and let us have a glass of wine together. Here, take my arm, Amy," cried the overjoyed old gentleman, leading the way to the great hall. "I really begin to feel a family man again, instead of a moping old bachelor. By the blessing of Heaven, we'll yet have some merry meetings in the old place again. Now, my love, say the word; port, sherry, or champagne?"

Then Sir William struck up,

"Oh, 'tis love, 'tis love, 'tis love,  
That makes the world go round!"

"Now, my son, be yourself again, and let the pleasures of the table have some share of your time. You once could do your bottle of Marcella as well as the best of us; and I'll see that the butler gets us a bottle on this occasion out of poor Robert's bin. He was a rare judge of wine, and, dear fellow——"

"The mention of Robert's name, father, is rather mal-apropos to the occasion. Neither I nor Amy can remember it with pleasure."

"Oh, let us all forget and forgive, Eustace," said Sir William. "We mustn't be too nice with each other. Your brother was a wild, harum-scarum, and Amy's beauty bewitched him from propriety. In token of his memory, and in token of our forgiveness of his trespasses, I shall order up a bottle of Marcella out of the bin that has not been touched since his lamented death."

"Dear Sir William," said Amy, "I am grateful for the joy you show and express at what so much concerns the mutual happiness of myself and Eustace."

"My dear Amy, it has made me feel quite—quite—heavens above! I don't know what."

"Father, Amy is laden with heavy news for you—news that I have not the liberty, had I the courage, to tell you," said Eustace.

"When I see you two thus united, I care for nothing. There is nothing now that can disturb me; so have no fear. What is it, Amy? Is Judith dead?"

"We left her very ill indeed, Sir William, and I have my fears that she will not recover."

"Poor lassie! she has been an excellent schoolmistress, and the children will lose a good friend in her. But what is the matter with her? So sudden, too! Explain, Eustace; you can, I know, if you will. Why should you keep me in ignorance?"

"For your own peace sake. However, father, to-morrow you shall know all. By this time, Mr. Shaw is in full possession of the secret which I was under promise never to reveal, and which for four years has driven me mad with sorrow. Thanks to the generosity of dear Amy, I feel happier and calmer now—feel a sweet sustaining power about me. But it is my impression that Judith has told her father the wretched wrong that has been done her, and Mr. Shaw



shall have my permission, if you wish it, to reveal the whole of the mystery to you. Do you agree with me in this, Amy?"

"Oh, yes; and when you know. Sir William, I implore you not to give way under it."

"Give way! Bless the child, I am not a baby, if Eustace is."

"Ah! father, you little know. It is well to carry your head high, and it is my prayer that you may be able to do so after Shaw has told the dread secret."

"Saddle my horse! I'll see Shaw to-night. If he knows, I will know, whatever the consequences it may bring upon me. Nothing can be worse than suspense."

He rang the bell, and a servant appearing, he ordered his horse to be saddled.

Sir William and his groom rode swiftly over the moonlit road, and were soon at the schoolhouse, where he dismounted, gave his horse to his groom, and knocked impatiently at the door with the butt-end of his heavy riding-whip.

The door was reluctantly opened by the old woman, and then not before asking "Who's there?" before she ascertained it to be Sir William Raymond. With his short blue riding-coat buttoned up close round his throat, and with some agitation and excitement, he followed the woman into the parlour, asking, as he went, after Judith.

"The dear creature is at peace, Sir William."

"What! dead?"

"Indeed, that's the truth," she replied, shaking her head mournfully.

"And where's Shaw?"

"With her corpse, Sir William."

"Let him know I am here—will you, please?"

She made a humble curtsy in reply, and left the room to acquaint the schoolmaster that Sir William was below. She found poor Mr. Shaw sitting as one in a dream, gazing on the fair dead body of his child. He did not notice his attendant, nor did he reply when she

spoke. Indeed he was so absorbed in his grief that even the talismanic name of Sir William Raymond made no impression on him, or he did not hear it. He sat with his head leaning against the post of the bedstead, and the rays of the moon slanted across his head and settled on the face of the beautiful corpse.

"Mr. Shaw, sir, Sir William Raymond is below, and wants you," repeated the old woman.

"Indeed! he has not been waiting, I hope," he calmly said, as he made his agitated way across the little chamber to the parlour.

The schoolmaster and his patron were below about half-an-hour, during which Sir William was placed in full possession of every particular of the mystery that had for so long brought such terrible misery to Eustace.

We will not trouble the reader with a narration of this interview, further than by stating that the schoolmaster, faithful to his promise, would not reveal anything his daughter had confessed on her death-bed, until Sir William told him that he had his son's permission to do so, and that then he made the communication in the most tender, delicate, and religious manner. Sir William, of course, was deeply affected, and when he discovered that his favourite son had murdered his own child, his lip perceptibly quivered with inward indignation. But further than this Sir William did not show his feelings at his son's conduct, and as he mounted his horse to return home he said—

"Shaw, I'm deeply sorry for your loss; but cheer up! You see, I have got my trouble, too, *now*, but we really must show ourselves Christians under the dispensations of the Great Supreme. I shall see you again to-morrow. Good night, Shaw!"

The humble-hearted schoolmaster said—"It is a sharp blow, Sir William, but all trouble is sent to make us stronger in the faith. Good night, sir!"

"Let all the funeral arrangements be well made, and at my ex-



pense. I shall attend myself. Poor Judith was worth all the respect that we can show her. Good night!"

"Peace be with you, Sir William!"

The latter rode swiftly homeward, and Mr. Shaw returned to his melancholy watching, and was soon again lost in dreamy abstractions while dwelling on the features of his dead daughter. And thus he passed the night.

Equally melancholy was the night Sir William passed. Unlike his son, he concealed his feelings, indeed put on outwardly a greater show of cheerfulness. He confessed to Eustace on his return that it was sad and bitter news that he had learnt from Mr. Shaw—news that he was entirely unprepared to hear—that it was an indelible taint and stain on the Raymond escutcheon—but, nevertheless, he should take Amy's counsel, and bear sorrow like a man. He expressed his deep sympathy with Eustace—yet he blamed him for being such a miser with his secret.

"I had no help for it, father. My word was given to the dying man."

"Under the circumstances it should not have been kept."

"For your sake, as well as for the honour of my word, I held my peace."

"Well, it is all out now, and it is a very bad affair. But the actors in it are dead, therefore, my son, let us strive to bury all remembrance of their perfidy."

"Dear Sir William, I am much relieved to find that you take the same view of the matter as I have," said Amy.

"Anything else would be folly, and now that we have you with us to cheer and delight us, the task will be easier—won't it, Eustace?"

"Much," was the brief and emphatic reply.

"That's refreshing!" exclaimed Sir William. "I am very sorry for poor Shaw. We must not forget the troubles of others. I can see he acutely feels the loss of his daughter."

"Is Judith dead?" Eustace and Amy exclaimed together.

"Ah, it is all over with her, poor girl."

Sir William would have said more, but at this moment Mr. Burchell returned, and, with a face of unusual satisfaction, amounting to joy, he joined the party.

"Burchell, my friend, you have been playing courtier to the widow in earnest."

"Ha, my dear Sir William," exclaimed Mr. Burchell, "time will show, time will show that you are right when you say that I have been in earnest. But this—this is better than all, to see our children in such amity."

He filled a glass with wine, and drank to the "reign of love!"

After this, Amy retired, in the company of the housekeeper, to her sleeping apartment; and Sir William took Mr. Burchell's arm, and, as they paced to and fro the long hall, he communicated to his friend all the good and bad events of this auspicious birthday.

Mr. Burchell took a "short, sharp, decisive" view of the events. While he expressed unbounded satisfaction at the reconciliation of his daughter and Eustace, in the matter of the murder that Robert had committed, he said—

"It is very deplorable—very deplorable, indeed, Sir William. But it is done—done—can't be helped now—and nothing more should be thought about it. One more cigar together, Sir William, and a little chat by that window, while we look out on the beautiful moonlit lawn, and then to bed. I have a great deal to say to you of my good fortune with Mrs. Sargood. My dear friend, when I tell you that I have won a victory over her heart, I trust that I have not won a victory over you."

"Let me congratulate you, Burchell. But surely you never for a moment supposed that a done-up old hunter like me ever dreamt of harnessing himself with a rollicking young filly like the widow?"

They both loudly laughed, and shook each other by the hand, and then, over the bottle, they stole a few hours from the night.



But after Sir William retired to his bed, his son's crime came in fresh force before him, and he could not sleep for anguish. Oh, no; Sir William was no more marble to the dishonour of his son than Eustace, but it did not affect him so morbidly as it did the latter.

## CHAPTER XX.

### A KEEN ENCOUNTER.

ON the morrow after the events just recorded, and by ten o'clock, Mr. Burchell was at Mr. Sargood's villa, there to meet Major Bevington. He had arranged with the widow to place himself in an ante-room of the apartment in which she was to receive the Major's visit. On this occasion Mr. Burchell had armed himself with a riding-whip and his two fifteen-hundred-pound bills.

The express was prompt, and by the hour the Major had appointed in his telegram to meet Mrs. Sargood he was at her door.

We have not much time to spend over Major Bevington. He was a tall, thin, gentlemanly man, with a Duke of Wellington nose, underneath which grew a bushy brown moustache; he was about the same age as Mr. Burchell. He was quietly but well dressed, with easy, graceful, well-bred manners, and plausible speech. But with all this he was a swindler of the first water, and although of good family connections, he was reduced to live by his wits. He introduced himself to Mrs. Sargood in a manner that betokened great friendship, and he was surprised at his cold reception.

"I am here once more to declare my love for you," he warmly said.

"And I am here to decline the honour," she replied, with a haughty curtsey, taking care that all she said should be well spoken, and loud enough for her affianced, who stood on the other side of the folding-doors of her apartment, to hear. The Major stood in increased surprise. She had given him hopes before. Why, then, this change?

"The missing deeds of your freeholds, Mrs. Sargood—"

"Thank you, sir; I have them here,"—and she held them up.

This was the greatest surprise of the Major's life.

"Impossible! They cannot be them. A cheat has been practised on you."

"Are you in the habit of disbelieving what you see, sir?"

"They may be forgeries; let me examine them."

"Nor touch them," she said, threateningly, as the Major was about to take the parchments from her hands. When Mr. Burchell heard this he had much to do to restrain himself from crying "Bravo!"

A great deal of maliciousness began now to light up the gentlemanly countenance of Major Bevington as the deeds were held at arms' length from him, and mistrust cast upon him by her he passionately loved.

"And from whom did you get them?"

"From me, sir! from me!" cried Mr. Burchell, throwing open the door, and standing before the Major with the whip in his hand.

"Oh, indeed!" said the Major, eyeing his antagonist from top to toe, and regarding the whip in his hand: "Mr. Burchell comes upon the scene."

"Yes, nor does he quit it, Major Bevington, until he has had some sort of satisfaction for the thousand pounds he was fool enough to let you rob him of."

"Pooh! that is a common trade transaction. But these deeds are my property, and I demand to know from whence you got them?"

"From me, you hartist!" and, to the surprise of all, entered James Ogden, with his great green gooseberry eyes, and as he turned them upon the lowering countenance of the Major they looked more comic than ever.

"Thief!" exclaimed the Major.

"The result of having been in your service," remarked Mr. Burchell.

"Cutting—very!" sneered the Major.

"You will find this more so,"



retorted Mr. Burchell, flourishing the riding-whip. "However, your reign is over here, sir; and let me tell you that if ever again you pursue this lady with word, look, or letter—short, sharp, and decisive—this whip will be brought into requisition. Open the door, Ogden, and let the fellow out."

"Ha! well! just so!" said the humiliated Major, with a half bow. "I have too much consideration for my position than to remain with common grooms and harpies."

Nothing more was ever after heard of Major Bevington.

Within two months after this scene, the bells of St. George's, Hanover Square, rang for the wedding between Mrs. Sargood and Mr. Burchell, which was celebrated in the gayest manner that wealth and extravagance could devise.

Sir William Raymond came to town to give the bride away. Alas! it was a hapless journey for him, and he never returned alive. He lost his life by an "accident upon the line." His son and heir now became Sir Eustace Raymond, and after the lapse of a few months from his father's death, he was married at Greatland's village church to Amy Burchell, who now became Lady Raymond. Mr. Shaw, who had been invested with a curacy, officially assisted at their wedding.

In one thing Mr. Burchell was greatly disappointed. His daughter became a good woman of business, so good indeed that she did not require her father's services in the management of the estate, and most decidedly declined them. One thousand pounds Mr. Burchell, within a twelvemonth of the two marriages, certainly managed to obtain from Sir Eustace—but that was all he ever got from the estate over which his daughter became mistress. Lady Raymond could not forget the character of

her father, nor the trouble he had brought on her and her husband in the early days of their love. Thus disappointed in his dearest hopes, which was to "fiddle" the estate for his own benefit, was rather crushing to him, and he had to use his wife's charms as a lure and a decoy to his splendid residence in Hyde Park Gardens to any who had money that he might "fleece" them.

While Sir Eustace and Lady Raymond lived a sound and wholesome life—a life of peace and virtue—and managed their estate with profit and prudence—Mr. Burchell and his beauteous bride passed their's in—yes, we must say it,—in disgrace and dishonour, which terminated in eventual separation and poverty. Lady Raymond allowed her father two hundred a year—but it gave her no happiness to have him on the estate. She was absolutely afraid that he would bring the same ruin on the estate as he had on himself.

On his two hundred a year he retired to Jersey,—that celebrated place for living a life of luxury with small means—and there he lived and in the course of a few years he died, and his body, by the desire of Lady Raymond was brought to England and "carried forward" for interment in Greatlands church-yard, and there, almost by the side of the grave of Judith Shaw, he lies until the "trumpet shall sound" for him and all the dead to arise and balance their accounts.

His death, now that his money and resources were gone, gave no deep concern to that "pink of fashion and the mould of form"—his widow. Age, too, seemed to have no effect on her charms, and with them she won a rich officer in the Blues—and he had the "blues" ever after, for his fascinating wife soon made "ducks and drakes" of his wealth.



## OUR MOURNING CUSTOMS.

When woes are feigned, how ill such  
forms appear,  
And, oh! how needless when the woe's  
sincere. CRABBE.

How can we best show a tender respect for the departed dead? Surely, by cherishing the memory of them in our hearts, by living as if their spirit still hovered around us to bless us, and by consecrating our lives to noble work and action, as if they were still present to cheer us on in the performance of our duty. What needs there more than this? Respect for their ashes! lay them down gently in their cold resting-place, away from the bustle and hum of men, where they may repose in peace, undisturbed by the sacrilegious spade of the city sexton, and secure against the horrible shovelling about, and carting away of their mouldered remains, as were daily witnessed in our crammed burying-grounds in the heart of our densely crowded towns and cities. Assuredly, this practice was neither consistent with a proper respect for the ashes of the dead, nor with a due regard for the health of the living.

But there needs a reform in our mourning customs. In no respect can the vanity and pageantry of human life be more out of place than in the pompous celebration of the obsequies of the dead. How foolish is the parade of fashion then! How idle the mummary of the undertaker's hired grief, and the feigned woe of the mutes and plume-bearers, who are paid for their day's parade. But it might be said that a stinted expenditure in the funeral exhibition would indicate a "want of respect" for the departed. Ah! how we fear that foolish Mrs. Grundy! It is to please *her* that all these cloaks, hatbands, and scarves, mourning coaches, gilded hearses, and processions of mutes, are hired; it is to find favour in *her* eyes that these fat black horses, laden with plumes, are led forth, and that we willingly

yield ourselves up a prey to the undertaker.

It is a notorious fact, that greater extortion of all kinds is practised by those in the funeral "profession" than in any other that can be named. Who could higgie with an undertaker about the price of a husband's or a son's funeral? In nearly all such cases, the undertaker assumes *carte blanche*; the grief in which the head of a family is usually plunged disables him or her from interfering. "Everything that is proper" is done, and an immense deal that is improper, but which there is no one to check. A frightful bill of expenses is run up, which is paid, as such bills are usually paid, without examination; for the subject is a most painful one, and we hurry from it as a relief. But it sometimes happens that the useless and extensive display which the undertaker has indulged in, has been at the expense of the family creditors, and it very often happens that the charge is one that can with the greatest difficulty be borne by the survivors of the departed. In the case of the head of the family removed by death, the expenditure is uselessly incurred at the very time when the survivors are least able to endure it. What comfort is it to a bereaved widow, or to a family of fatherless children, that from £500 to £1000 have been expended on a fashionable funeral, when the breadwinner himself has gone? Would not the means which have so foolishly been expended in paying an empty honour to the dead, have been much better applied in being reserved for the comfort and maintenance of the living?

It is not, however, among the wealthy upper classes that the evils of this useless and expensive funeral mummary are felt so much as among the middle and working classes. The evil propagates itself downwards throughout society. An expensive funeral is held to



be "respectable." Middle-class people, who are struggling for front places in society, make an effort to rise into the region of mutes and nodding plumes; and, like their "betters," they are victimised by undertakers. These fix the fashion for the rest; "we must do as others do;" all submit to pay the tax. They array themselves, friends, and servants, in mourning; and a respectable funeral is thus purchased. "At such a time," says a writer in the *Times*, "the tradesman has matters in his own hands. How is a wretched widow, in the midst of her sobs and agony, to cheapen black gloves, and weepers, and similar trash, which the taste of an undertaker suggests, and the folly of the public accepts 'as the trappings and the suits of woe.' Can orphan children, just deprived of the protecting hand of a parent, who had hitherto stood between them and the trials and struggles of the world, take their first plunge into life by haggling with a tradesman upon the number of black horses that are to caper at the funeral? It is at such a moment when, in thousands and thousands of cases, every pound and every shilling is of consequence to the survivors that the little ready money that can be scraped together is lavished, without a question, upon a vulgar pageant on which the eyes of the mourners are too heavy to gaze, and from which a casual passer-by turns aside with disgust. It would be no immoderate calculation which should reckon by millions the money annually wasted in England upon those absurd funeral exhibitions. Think what a sum of money is thus wasted—think of the class of persons from whom it is drawn—of the unfair advantage taken of the distraction of their minds—and of the order of tradesmen who are the only persons benefitted by these pitiable exhibitions of vulgarity and folly."

Among the less wealthy classes, interment is often delayed from the difficulty of raising money for the funeral expenses; for mourn-

ers have to be hired and paid, and expensive clothes have to be provided. The heavy dues on funerals in London also considerably add to the expenses. Very often a poor widow and her family are crippled in their means for life by the funeral of her husband. "An ordinary funeral," said Mr. Wild, an undertaker, in his examination before a Committee of the House of Commons, "an ordinary funeral, burial fees and all, will cost from £50 to £70, which will deprive her of £5 a year from ten to fourteen years, besides the interest." This is the average expense of the ordinary funerals of the middle classes. And then, think of the mummary represented by the officials attending; the array is that of a baronial funeral; the two mutes who stand at the doors being supposed to represent the two porters of the castle, with their staves, in black; the man who heads the procession, waving a scarf, being a representative of a herald-at-arms; the man who carries a plume of feathers on his head being an esquire, who bears the shield and casque, with its plume of feathers; the pall-bearers with batons, being knights-companions-at-arms; and the men walking with wands being supposed to represent gentlemen-ushers, with their wands!

The same evil propagates itself downwards in society, the working classes suffering equally with the middle classes in proportion to their means. The average cost of a tradesman's funeral in England is about fifty pounds; of a mechanic or labourer it ranges from five pounds to ten pounds. In Scotland funeral expenses are considerably lower. The desire to secure respectable interment for departed relatives is a strong and widely-diffused feeling among our labouring population, and it does them great honour. They will subscribe for this purpose when they will for no other. The largest of all working men's clubs are burial clubs. There is one society of this kind in Liverpool containing forty-seven thousand



members, and three others containing thirty-six thousand members. Similar societies are to be found in nearly all our towns and villages; they are more generally supported than benefit clubs, whose object it is to make a provision for the living in the shape of sick relief and medical attendance during illness. In those clubs £10 is usually allowed for the funeral of a husband, and £5 for the funeral of a wife. There are also Children's Burial Clubs, which are extensively supported.

These burial clubs are not free from abuses of various kinds. Sometimes they are got up by small undertakers, sometimes by public-house-keepers, who both derive considerable profits out of the society, the former from the funerals, the latter from the drinkings which precede and follow them. A large amount of money is also spent on decorations, on mutes, and undertakers' men, which might be better employed. As much as fifteen, twenty, thirty, and even forty pounds, are occasionally expended on a mechanic's funeral, in cases where the deceased has been a member of several clubs, on which occasions the undertakers meet, and "settle" between them their several shares in the performances of the funeral. The occasion of a funeral of this kind occurring is looked forward to in some districts in a very different light from that in which such an event ought to be regarded; the "stir" and parade which it causes, and the drinking which attends it, are but a repetition of the same folly which characterises the funerals of the upper classes. It is not unusual to insure a child's life in four or five of these burial clubs; and we have heard of a case where one man had insured payments in no fewer than nineteen different burial clubs in Manchester. The allowance in the event of a child's death varies from £3 to £5; whereas the actual cost of the child's funeral may be only 30s. Is there not reason to fear that in some cases the high gains realised on the death of a child so insured may

act as a bounty on neglect and infanticide—especially on minds depraved by intemperance or bad example?

When the working man, in whose family a death has occurred, does not happen to be a member of a burial club, he is still governed by their examples, and has to tax himself seriously to comply with the usages of society, and give to his wife or child a respectable funeral. Where it is the father of the family himself who has fallen a victim, the case is still harder. Perhaps all the savings of his life are spent in providing mourning for the wife and children at his death. Such an expense at such a time is ruinous; and it is altogether unjustifiable. Does putting on garments of a certain colour constitute true mourning? Is it not in the heart, and the affections, rather than on the outside of the person? Is not the practice merely a compliance with custom and fashion, and without any foundation in reason or religious authority? Bingham, speaking of the primitive Christians, states "that they did not condemn the notion of going into a mourning habit for the dead, nor yet much approve of it, but left it to all men's liberty as an indifferent thing, rather commending those that either omitted it wholly, or in short laid it aside again, as *acting more in accordance to the bravery and philosophy of a Christian.*" Yet, convinced though we may be of the uselessness of the practice of external mourning, how difficult is it to *act out* our convictions in this matter! It were easier to stand out on the battlefield against vomited fire, and a storm of bullets, than have the fashion, the sneers, the opinion of "the world," against us. Then, the occasion is usually one on which we dare the least to incur the charge of want of respect for departed friends. We shrink back and play the coward, like our neighbours!

Still, common sense, repeatedly expressed, will have its own weight, and is gradually modifying the fashions of society. The last act



of the lamented Queen Adelaide was one by which she dispensed with the hired mummery of undertakers' grief; and the equally characteristic request of Sir Robert Peel on his death-bed, that no ceremony nor pomp should attend his last obsequies, have had their due effect on the fashionable world; and through them the middle classes, who are so disposed to imitate them in all things, will in time benefit by the example. There is also, we believe a growing disposition on the part of the people at large to avoid the unmeaning displays we refer to; and it only needs the repeated and decided expression of public opinion to effect a large measure of beneficial reform in this direction.

The waste now annually incurred on funerals would make thousands of destitute families comfortable;

would suffice in the metropolis, according to Edwin Chadwick, "for the endowment of educational and other institutions that would go far to retrieve the condition of the poorer classes. The waste of two years in the metropolis would suffice for the erection of a magnificent cathedral, and of a third year for its ample endowment.

Societies have been established in the United States, the members of which engage to disuse mournings themselves, and to discountenance the use of them in others. It is, perhaps, only by association and the power of numbers that this reform is to be accomplished; for individuals here and there could scarcely be expected to make way against the deeply-rooted prejudices on this subject of the community at large.

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## THE CHIEF DUTY OF WOMAN.

"WHAT a miserable thing it is to be a woman!" was lately the exclamation of an amiable but high-spirited lady. She had been admirably educated by indulgent parents, and taught accomplishments beyond her station in life. Now, being married to a worthy man, of moderate income, and having a family of young children, the little elegances and accomplishments and *romance* of youth had to be laid aside, and duties of a plain and sober cast claimed incessant attention. Her husband was out all day—he had to hurry off in the morning, and often came home tired and worn-out late at night. She herself, of a buoyant disposition, passionately fond of society and public meetings, and who had, *when free*, been an active member of more than one "Ladies' Committee," was now, as she expressed it, tied up like a dog to its kennel. The piano was untouched, unless now and then the little girl, standing on tiptoe, contrived to give it a jarring *thrum*; the sketch-book was a sealed book; her own sense of domestic duty led her to practise economy, as far as it could be carried; she loved her husband, and had every reason, she said, to be perfectly happy; yet old recollections would revive, and feeling as if she were now reduced to the capacity of being merely a nurse of children, she exclaimed pettishly, "What a miserable thing it is to be a woman!"

This is an old complaint of the ladies, and is amusingly enough put forward in a tract, published more than a century ago (1739), under the title of "Woman not Inferior to Man; or a Short and Modest Vindication of the Natural Right of the Fair Sex to a Perfect Equality of Power, Dignity, and Esteem, with the Men. By Sophia, a person of Quality." The reputed fair authoress says, "Was every individual man to divulge his thoughts

of our sex, they would all be found unanimous in thinking that we are made only for them, and only fit to nurse children in their tender years, to mind household affairs, and to obey, serve, and please our masters,—that is themselves, forsooth! All this is mighty fine, and amongst a seraglio of slaves could not but sound mighty big from a Mussulman's mouth. . . . To stoop to some regard for the strutting things is not enough; to humour them more than we could children, with any tolerable decency, is too little; they must be served, forsooth! Pretty creatures indeed!"

Sophia, however, takes a just view of the importance of one of the chief duties of women. "It is too well known," she says, "to be dissembled, that the office of nursing children is held by the men in a despicable light, as something low and degrading: whereas, had they Nature for their guide, they would not need to be told, that there is no employment in a commonwealth which deserves more honour, or greater thanks and rewards. Let it but be considered, what are the advantages accruing to mankind from it, and its merit must stand immediately confessed. Nay, I know not whether it may not appear to render women deserving the first places in civil society. . . . How largely are they rewarded who succeed in taming a tiger, an elephant, or such-like animals; and shall women be neglected for spending years in the taming that fiercer animal, *man*?"

—To an active-minded woman, who occasionally *thinks*, the burdens, pains, and duties of life must occasionally appear to be very unequally divided; and when left to her own reflections, man will at times seem, if not a savage, at least a very selfish animal. The "march of intellect" has not hitherto done



women much good in this respect. Their mental faculties have received a wrong direction; they share in that *ascending* spirit which mental stimulus communicates: they receive what is called a fine, or an accomplished education, are made sensitive, sympathetic, and delicate; and go through life struggling to maintain a balance in the equivocal half-lady, half-servile position of a governess, or they sink into an ordinary marriage, with perhaps a decided distaste for the mere dull routine, as it seems, of a small domestic establishment. This appears to us to be one of the evils of our state of society, which is both serious and large in amount. Ignorance is bad: but ignorant—that is, comparatively ignorant—women have generally a hardy healthy cast of mind, which our modern system of female education is calculated greatly to impair. There is nothing more delightful than to meet, in the ordinary walks of life, with a woman of sound good sense, whose conversation and manner show that her mind has been well educated, and stored with useful and ornamental knowledge. But we are constrained to say, that this is a rarer case, than to meet with a feeble or an affected creature, whose only use of an “accomplished education” is alternately to shine and murmur.

“There is one class of duties,” says Mrs. Sandford, “which, as it went out with our grandmothers, is now considered quite obsolete. We wonder, indeed; how these venerable ladies could be so familiar with the pantry, and yet never soil their petticoats; how they could preside over the culinary department, and be adepts in every domestic art, and yet be still as stately as their ruffles or brocade. Ladies were in those days accountable for every dish; they smiled with conscious triumph when the sauce was praised; they made current wine and raspberry vinegar; and their cupboards were stored with expressed juices and ingenious confections. But now there is

something inelegant that attaches to the *ménage*. It is associated with making puddings or mending stockings, or scolding servants. A good housewife is a good sort of bustling persons, who has always a good dinner and a clean house; who jingles a bunch of keys, and gasps for an opportunity of replenishing your plate.”

That men and women were intended, in one sense, to be on an equality, seems evident, both from nature and Scripture; and married men, who sometimes exhibit a very commendable propriety in their general conduct, are frequently grossly selfish in leaving to their wives all the burden, all the restraints, and all the *dulness* of a family and of home. “God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” Population tables show that there is scarcely any disproportion in the births of males and females, thus bringing the sanction of nature to Scripture, and demonstrating that though polygamy existed by permission in Old Testament times, it is against a natural rule. Heeren advances the position, that the great moral, social, and intellectual superiority of European nations over the Eastern is owing to the simple fact of the non-prevalence of polygamy. There appears to be great truth in this. Wherever woman stands on an equal footing with man, there man himself rises, and society improves. Woman, in the East, has no social consideration. Indirect influence she has, of course—for even amongst coarse-minded, unintellectual savages, where she is compelled to perform all the drudgery, woman has influence—but this is exercised in a way which neither improves individuals nor society.

But while women were thus intended to be man's social and domestic equals, the life and ornament of his society, they were never intended to be his *intellectual* equals; and that education which attempts to force this equality will only defeat itself, and injure its



objects. We must prop ourselves here with an opinion. The author of "Home Education" says:—"Every day, in society, we may meet with women equal to, or surpassing men in intelligence; but if male and female minds, of apparently equal intelligence, are brought into comparison, very few instances will occur in which the latter are not far inferior to the former in POWER." "Some allowance," he adds, "ought, as I am inclined to think, to be made in the culture of the female mind for what I would not call an organic difference of structure, if I could find a term nearer to my meaning, and not so liable to misconstruction."

To this we cordially subscribe; and the intellectual difference, thus pointed out at once directs attention to the character and object of female education. HOME should be the sphere to which the female mind should ever be directed. Let the females of a nation fulfil, in intelligent spirit and truth, the duties of home, and there is little fear of its men. In all ages, the WOMEN of ENGLAND have exercised a powerful social and domestic influence. With us the fireside virtues have ever been revered. This, therefore, is to be taken into account in the history of our rise and progress as a nation; and far distant be the day when a false system of education, or a vain straining after intellectual pre-eminence, shall lead them to quit their stronghold, and make them dissatisfied unless they can spend their time in the public view, fluttering and promenading, like butterflies in a summer's sun!

Guizot, in his History of Civilisation in Europe, dates the origin of the influence of woman from the feudal system. He draws a picture of a feudal castle, on a hill, at the foot of which lies its village of serfs. The lord of this establishment can maintain no familiarity with his dependants; he can scarcely have any equal companionship, unless when engaged in war

and hunting. "The chief, however violent and brutal his out-door exercises, must habitually return into the bosom of his family. He there finds his wife and children, and scarcely any but them; they alone are his constant companions; they alone divide his sorrows and soften his joys; they alone are interested in all that concerns him. It could not but happen, in such circumstances, that domestic life must have acquired a vast influence, nor is there any lack of proofs that it did so. Was it not in the bosom of the feudal family that the importance of women, that the value of the wife and mother, at last made itself known? In none of the ancient communities—not merely speaking of those in which the spirit of family never existed, but in those in which it existed most powerfully; say, for example, in the patriarchal system—in none of these did women ever attain to anything like the place which they acquired in Europe under the feudal system. It is to the progress, to the preponderance, of domestic manners in the feudal halls and castles, that they owe this change, this improvement in their condition. The cause of this has been sought for in the peculiar manners of the ancient Germans; in a national respect which they are said to have borne, in the midst of their forests, to the female sex. Upon a single phrase of Tacitus, Germanic patriotism has founded a high degree of superiority—of primitive and ineffable purity of manners, in the relations between the two sexes among the Germans. Pure chimeras! Phrases like this of Tacitus—sentiments and customs analogous to those of the Germans of old,—are found in the narratives of a host of writers, who have seen, or inquired into, the manners of savage and barbarous tribes. There is nothing primitive, nothing peculiar, to a certain race in this matter."

Now, with all deference to this great master of philosophical his-



tory, we *do* think that there is something "peculiar to a certain race in this matter;" and, in England, at least, his theory of the origin of the influence of woman will not hold. Not to go so far back as Boadicea and the ancient Britons, we find that the condition of women, in early Saxon times, was, on the whole, very favourable. In old illuminations, they are represented as sitting at table with the men; they are scarcely, if ever, exhibited as taking a part in the labours of the field; they appear to have been almost exclusively occupied within doors; and their names are poetically expressive—Adeleve, the noble wife; Wynfreda, the peace of man; Deorwyn, dear to man; Deorswythe, very dear; Winnefride, a winner or gainer of peace.

The feudal system was perfected in England after the Norman conquest; and we have abundant proof, during the long period from William the Conqueror to Henry the Eighth, and Elizabeth, that the influence of French customs on the court and nobility, while they polished the manners of the ladies, deteriorated their morals. The Reformation elevated female character, though the process was apparently interrupted by the gross buffoonery of the Court of James I. The civil wars tended to develop the strength and single-mindedness of women, when sustained by religion: of this we have noble examples in the respective memoirs of Lady Fanshawe and Mrs. Hutchinson. But the Restoration cast once more a blight over female character, as far as the influence of the court extended.

With this exception, the characteristic of the women of England, from the earliest period down to our own day, has ever been that of fulfilling the domestic relations of life with zeal, strictness, and fidelity. Pope, in uttering a sarcasm, paid them a compliment when he said, "most women have no character at all." The sarcasm was aimed at that class of triflers who formed the fashionable world with which

Pope was chiefly acquainted: but when applied generally, it is so far true, that the bulk of women have no *character*—that is, no distinctive peculiarities of mind, to make them stand out in relief, and this very want of *character* is their great excellence, and that which fits them to shine in the domestic circle. Characteristic women are often troublesome companions; and a female requires much good sense to balance mental peculiarities or intellectual cleverness.

We conclude with an illustration taken from the vegetable kingdom. The Banyan tree (*Ficus Indica*) is a native of most parts of India; and we are told that "if the seeds drop in the axils of the palmyra tree, the roots grow downwards, embracing the trunk in their descent; by degrees they envelope every part except the top, whence, in very old specimens, the leaves and head of the palmyra tree are seen emerging from the trunk of the banyan tree as if they grew from it. The Hindoos regard such cases with reverence, and call them a holy marriage, instituted by Providence. The banyan tree, covering with its trunks a sufficient space of ground to shelter a regiment of cavalry, and used as a natural canopy for great public meetings, has been so often described by writers on India as to have become familiar to the reader. The branches spread to a great extent, dropping their roots here and there, which, as soon as they reach the ground, increase in size, till they become as large as and similar to the parent trunk, by which means the quantity of ground they cover is almost incredible."

Our readers, we trust, require no application of this illustration. To our minds it is a beautiful exemplification of that intimate union and mutual protection and dependence which constitute the roots of human society, and which, we fear, the stimulating character of modern female education tends in some degree to injure. But as we have probably given enough of our *prose*, let us part with a nice little bit of Moore's *poetry*:—



TO MY MOTHER.

They tell us of an Indian tree  
Which, howsoe'er the sun and sky  
May tempt its boughs to wander free,  
And shoot, and blossom wide and high,  
Far better loves to bend its arms  
Downward again to that dear earth

From which the life that fills and warms  
Its grateful being, first had birth.  
'Tis thus, though woo'd by flattering  
friends,  
And fed with fame (if fame it be),  
This heart, my own dear mother, bends,  
With love's true instinct, back to thee!

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A SPRING SONG.

I HAVE often watched the changing  
Of the springtime's early glow  
To more brilliant summer beauty.  
Steady was the change, but slow,  
And the summer days passed over,  
Glowing autumn then stole on,  
Till the warmth and beauty faded.  
Winter came, and both were gone.  
Is not life like these brief seasons?  
May we not full well compare  
Youth, with fresh and budding beauty,  
To the lovely springtide fair?  
Then, as youth glides into manhood,  
And our days are in their prime,  
In their boastful strength and gladness—  
Is not this like summer time?  
But, once pass'd the fair meridian,  
Brief the triumph of our strength.  
Years increase—old age steals o'er us:  
Soon we feel the journey's length.  
Short and feeble grow our footsteps—  
Eyes are dim which once were bright.  
As life's winter fast advances  
Fainter burns its former light.  
But the winter, though 'tis dreary,  
Will but for a few months last.  
Then the spring once more will gladden,  
And the gloom will all be "past."  
So with us, but far more glorious!  
When life's winter once is o'er,  
What a spring eternal waits us,  
Which will last for evermore!  
There no summer heats will weary—  
There no winds of autumn chill;  
But for ever, and for ever,  
All will bloom in beauty still.  
Ah! what lessons nature teaches!  
And how much may we not learn,  
If we seek to read her pages,  
And her warnings true discern!



## COUNTRY-TOWN SKETCHES.

THE aspect of some of our little quiet provincial boroughs, basking, as it were, in the sunshine of a summer day, is very prepossessing. To the dwellers in large cities, or the inhabitants of the woods and fields, a small country town forms equally an object of curiosity; the latter wonder how anybody can be found to live constantly in a town at all, and the city folk, how they can live in a small town; and certainly small towns are, to active-minded persons, more suited for casual visits than for a permanent abode. There are, however, many shades of difference between them. Some give an idea of laziness, some of dullness, and some of quietude only; while some are dirty, and some are bustling—characteristics which strongly impress themselves upon the mind of a traveller, even should his sojourn be limited to the change of horses at an inn. In the metropolis, the spectator, as he surveys the crowd which throngs in every thoroughfare, wonders how habitations can be found for the masses of people which seem to choke up the avenues; while, in country towns, he suspects, in spite of some slight indications to the contrary—smoke from the chimneys, and flower-pots in the windows—that the houses are destitute of inhabitants. It seems to be a rule of etiquette among the genteeler sort never to be seen. Tiers upon tiers of windows, five in a row, will stretch themselves along some substantial brick mansion, adorned with the whitest of little muslin curtains, and bright with continual cleaning; but not a head, not even the housemaid, appears at one of them. The shops are gaily set out with ribbons and gauds of the most tempting description, but they seem to possess no attraction for the belles of the place; and if there should be a group of young ladies, either lounging at the door, or looking into the windows, ten to one but they belong to the

carriage at the corner of the street, which has just brought them in from the country.

A knot of two or three gentlemen may sometimes be seen congregating together under the portico of the chief inn, but the ladies are infinitely more secluded. Most of them, nevertheless, contrive not only to hear, but to see all that is going on. The smallest movement in the place becomes known by a sort of magic. An event, no matter what, occurs at the eastern extremity of the town, and all about it is known in no time at the western boundary; the rapidity with which the intelligence travels resembling, in some respects, the velocity of an electrical shock, which is felt at both ends of a wire at the same instant of time. The incoming of any stranger is, in particular, a matter of extraordinary interest; it is as good as meat and drink—bed, board, and washing for a week—to half a hundred gossips, who are not long in ascertaining his pedigree up to the days of Noah, and his resources even to the odd pounds, shillings, and pence, lying in the hands of his banker. The arrival of a post-chaise is a great affair in these old-fashioned dreamy towns; and even the circumstance of the family carriage of the neighbouring squire having been seen on shopping excursions three times during the week, is a bit of news not to be despised. It is known, beyond the possibility of doubt, that there will soon be a marriage in the family of the Barringers at the Lodge; that the postman has called at the cottage of Captain Riley five times within the last fortnight with letters, some of them with large red wax seals, stamped with a coat of arms—crest, a stag passant; that Miss Humphries has sported a new bonnet, which must have come from London; and that all the Creswells have gone into mourning—facts, the two latter, at least, which, but for



some extraordinary degree of vigilance, could not have transpired until the following Sunday, when the church bells would of course bring out the whole population, and, should the weather prove fine, all attired in their very best.

There is generally very great diversity in the buildings of a small town: one tall mansion will have minikin neighbours on each side, a little better than stalls; others are low, and occupy a large portion of ground; and some are oddly squeezed into corners, as if every inch of land was of the greatest consequence. Upon walking down the principal streets, we see through the shops and back-parlour windows, pretty gardens filled with many-coloured flowers, or a sudden opening gives a bright glimpse of country. The rural air, and the excessive cleanliness of those shops, render them very attractive; even that of the butcher losing all its offensiveness in the absence of many of the appurtenances connected with the trade in larger places.

The servants belonging to a provincial town form one of its curiosities; they are distinguished alike from those domesticated in the country families, and those who are found in the metropolis. The women, perhaps, have an advantage in the comparison; they are fresher looking, and dress quite as gaily, but in a more picturesque style; the crowns of their caps reach a higher altitude, and the ribbons are of a more gaudy description. The male servitors are, on the other hand, anything but smart, either in appearance or manners. Their awkwardness seems to bid defiance even to the powers of a drill-serjeant; and though as much addicted as their metropolitan brethren to standing at street-doors, they never acquire the indolent lounge of the latter. If out of livery, there is no mistaking the man for the master, unless the latter be a very vulgar person indeed. Now, in London, the butler is sometimes the finer looking gen-

tleman of the two, while the footmen perform the duties of their office with a grace which seems perfectly marvellous. Nothing incommoded by their long canes, they open the carriage doors, let down the steps, and present their arms to the ladies with the greatest possible ease and facility: they glide about dressing-rooms amongst the bijouterie without raising alarm in the breasts of the beholders, performing the offices required of them with perfect command of countenance and action: the most ridiculous circumstance occurring in their presenee would fail to move them to laughter, and they never speak except in the most respectful manner, and upon occasions of absolute necessity. In fact, they are so well bred in their official capacity, that it is rather a puzzle to know how they conduct themselves in private life, and whether the servants' hall is not equally as decorous as the drawing-room. Country servants, on the contrary, find it impossible to contain their merriment when any thing ludicrous is said or done; they are loquacious upon every occasion, and, nine times out of ten, are tolerably certain of extinguishing the candles should they attempt to snuff them, and of spilling the coals out of the scuttle when called upon to make up the fire. It is but justice, however, to recollect that what may be wanting in dexterity and polish, is compensated by fidelity and attachment—virtues of greater value. The country-town servant, who brews the beer, milks the cow, works in the garden, grooms the horse, drives the pony-chaise, and waits at table, forms another species of person, an active hard-working man of much respectability. But it is the show-servants of some of the superior establishments who afford the best subjects for caricature, and may generally be ranked amongst the absurdities of the place.

The aristocratic principle is beautifully illustrated in places such as we allude to. The town and its



suburbs are sectioned into social compartments, of at least a dozen degrees of rank, all differing from each other, yet all nicely shading off down and down, from the most exalted to the most humble and poverty-stricken. The members of each class thus visit only among themselves, and only recognise those below them at odd, out-of-the-way times, or when their dignity may not be compromised by an appearance of familiarity. A stranger, therefore, paying a passing visit to the place must take infinite care how he calls upon any one in, or attaches himself to, the wrong circle; for there to a certainty he must remain. No power or address can save him, or, in other words, drag him upwards, after making the false step—that is, always providing, and it being understood, that he is not an unmarried man with a competence or fortune. For, then, the case is entirely altered; the higher order, somehow or other, having always lots of daughters of a marriageable quality, whom they are anxious to see established in life, and for whose sake they are willing for a time to make a concession to the spirit of democracy.

Sometimes a very slender line of demarcation separates the visitable from the unvisitable; a sort of suburb is considered quite distinct from the town, and goes by a different name; and the houses standing separate, with gardens around them, the inhabitants are to all intents and purposes entitled to the benefits of such a position. But while one end of the town is thus rendered fashionable, the other end, even though divided by a bridge, enjoys not the same privilege. The houses may be as good, the gardens as spacious, yet those who dwell there must be content to call themselves town's-people, and to limit their ambition to the society which the place affords. Should it happen that a person of low origin, thriving in business, who has realised a fortune, chooses to retire from trade, and to establish himself in a good house in the town, in all probability he will not

be visited; but if another individual in the same rank in life should acquire wealth elsewhere, no great matter how, and return to spend it in the place of his nativity, he will find no great difficulty in getting into society.

Some persevering individuals, however, belonging to families which have no pretensions to dignity of birth, generally are found to rise to eminence in a country town; and should the name happen to be odd as well as vulgar, such as Gabbage, or Hoggins, or Snugs, or Ruggleton, the nature of the origin becomes very manifest. There will be Mr. Ruggleton the banker, a very great man indeed; Mr. John Ruggleton the lawyer, very nearly, if not quite, as great; then comes one Richard Ruggleton, scarcely acknowledged by his proud relations, who keeps a secondary inn; James Ruggleton, a butcher, no connection at all, according to the statements of the grand people; while in some of the shabbiest lanes and alleys, a barber's pole will be seen protruding from the door of an extremely small shop, with Thomas Ruggleton written beneath it; and a little lower down, a placard or board, with the following inscription painted askew in white letters—"Mangling done here by Ann Ruggleton." The only roof under which all these scions of the same stock meet, is the church. The Misses Ruggleton *par distinction*, the banker's daughters, walk up the principal aisle, attended by a servant in a blue livery coat, with bright yellow plush accessories, carrying their prayer books; the lawyer's family are followed by a boy in pepper and salt, cuffed and collared with red, it not having been yet discovered that family liveries should always be the same; the innkeeper's daughters walk in by themselves, and unluckily occupy a pew whence they can bow to their grand relations; the butcher's daughters sit in greater obscurity behind, but near to their cousins of the Dog and Duck, with whom they are upon terms of the closest intimacy,



while the poorer sort establish themselves in the meaner order of seats. Ann Ruggleton thinks it hard that she cannot get the custom of those fine people, who are all her own kith and kin, and whom she remembers to have been no better off than herself. The barber has turned radical, and abuses the aristocracy on account of the treatment which he has received from relations who look down upon him; and the butcher is sometimes restive; he is only conciliated at elections, and is hardly to be persuaded into voting the right way. A few other members of the family, such as the milliners, and the post-office Ruggletons, are content to visit their rich relations clandestinely as it were, that is when they have no other company; they are wise enough to know that the rules imposed upon society are of a very despotic nature, and that the gentry of the town would object to meet them while they continued in the situation from which their relatives had raised themselves. In fact while each complains of the pride of the other, the greater number are more or less jealous, and tenacious of their own consequences; the whole clan unite in their disdain of Ann Ruggleton, who takes in mangling, and were by no means pleased when the barber's brother got into one of the alms-houses; they would rather that he should have been reduced to pauperism elsewhere; for, though unwilling to contribute to his maintenance, they were ashamed of his obtaining relief from the town funds.

Occasionally there are little histories connected with the inhabitants of the houses in these rural communities, which are very touching, although the town's-people themselves, long accustomed to the circumstances which have coloured the destiny of their neighbours, may attach little or no interest to them. One very respectable-looking house, with a large garden behind, situated in the very centre of a particular town now in our eye, is inhabited

by a lady, who has never once crossed the threshold during the last fifty years. She is now seventy-three, and has always been in the enjoyment of excellent health. Her abjuration of the world was occasioned by the death of her husband, who expired suddenly upon his wedding-day. The constitution and the intellects of the unhappy widow survived the shock, but she remained inconsolable in her grief. No persuasion could induce her to pass through the door which she had entered as a joyous bride—a long perspective of felicity opening before her—and whence the remains of her best beloved were taken to their last resting-place. Her firmness wearied her friends, who at length ceased their importunities; she has survived them all, and, making no new acquaintances, receives no visitors. One confidential servant, some fifteen or twenty years younger than herself, manages her household, and attends her in her walks in the garden, the only place in which she is to be seen. Clad in the deepest widow's weeds, the old lady, on a bright summer day, paces up and down the broad gravel walk, or seats herself upon one of the grass-plots, in an arm-chair brought out for the purpose, and a piece of carpeting under her feet. She tenants the back rooms in the house; and the idle passenger, peering through the front windows, sees only two tolerably-sized parlours, furnished exactly alike, with Turkey carpets covering the centre of the floor, a small table beneath the looking-glass opposite the windows, high-backed chairs all round, and fire-screens papered up on each side of the grate. Every person in the town is acquainted with the story, but it seems to make little impression, except upon the breast of the stranger, who, saddened by the tale of long and quiet suffering, carries the recollection away, and often return in thought to the widow's abode, speculating upon the nature of her feelings, and marvelling at the union of sen-



sibility and apathy which seems to have been the characteristics of her mind; the one leading to the resolution which she adopted, the other carrying her through it.

All country towns may not be equally fortunate, but another house in the birth-place of the Ruggletons, has a still more remarkable tale attached to it. It is tenanted by a widow, the heroine of the story. The husband of this lady happened to be a very singular character, strongly addicted to antiquarian pursuits. He had the upper part of this house, the attics, converted into a museum, and built a room amongst them, lighted and ventilated in a very peculiar manner. Amid other curiosities there were two skeletons, objects so alarming to the servants, that none disputed with him the privilege of dusting and brushing; offices which he took upon himself, in consequence of the dread he entertained of injury to the precious relics. The dread of the skeletons was so great, that not one of the servants willingly approached the staircase leading to the room in which they were deposited; and one and all united in declaring that very strange sounds had been heard to proceed from these same attics. No one felt much surprised when his first wife died, for he had not the credit of being a good husband; nor did they expect that he would grieve long after her, since her death put him into uncontrolled possession of a very handsome fortune. Some astonishment, however, was manifested at the change which took place in the outward appearance of the widower; he became spruce in his dress, gay and courteous in his manners, and purchased no more curiosities, attending, however, still very diligently to those in his possession. Before the expiration of a twelvemonth, he had prevailed upon a very beautiful young lady, the portionless daughter of a curate, to become his wife. He told her plainly beforehand, that, in marrying her, she must submit to some, perhaps, disagreeable

restrictions, as he had made up his mind never to leave the town in which he resided; and, therefore, in the first place, there would be no bridal tour. Business in which he was engaged, formed part of the plea, but his eccentricity seemed to be at the bottom of it. He behaved better to the second wife than he had done to the first, treating her with a great deal of kindness, and refusing to allow her to assist him in dusting the curiosities, which she had offered to do, thinking to please him, but from which she was not sorry to be excused. Several children were the offspring of this marriage, and the wife was obliged to leave home occasionally, either for her own health, or that of her infants; but her husband did not accompany her in any of these excursions, being apparently immersed in business, and, notwithstanding his wealth, anxious to improve his fortune by mercantile speculations. At length, in about ten years after his second marriage, the vault in which the remains of his first wife had been deposited was opened, in consequence of some necessary repairs. It appeared that the undertaker had contrived to abstract the leaden coffin in which the body had been enclosed; the wooden one fell to pieces, and out tumbled the corpse. The perfect state of the body attracted attention; for a face, ghastly, it is true, but still undecayed, appeared beneath the mouldering shroud. Upon examination, the supposed corpse proved to be a wax figure, and an outcry arose in the vault that murder had been committed. A warrant being immediately made out for the apprehension of the suspected party, one of the magistrates of the place proceeded to his abode, and without any circumlocution acquainted him with the predicament in which he stood. After a few moments of strong perturbation, the accused exclaimed, "Gentlemen, I have a living witness to prove my innocence of the crime imputed to me!" and, leading the way to the attics, he opened several



doors, and brought out a prisoner, being no other than his first wife, whom he had contrived to keep in close confinement during so long a portion of her existence. The agitation produced by the discovery, and the dread of its consequences, brought on an attack of cholera, and in a very few hours the oppressor was himself a corpse. These incidents proved a nine-days' wonder in the town, but the excitement they occasioned died away gradually. The second wife, who, fortunately, was well provided for in a will made with due knowledge of all the circumstances of the case, repaired to the Continent with her children, whilst the first wife, accustomed to confinement, seemed to have lost all enterprise and energy, and to be quite content to occupy the upper, instead of the lower part of the house, in which she had endured so tedious an imprisonment. She is a quiet old lady, fond of cards, enlivened occasionally with a little gossip, her own strange history not having so imbued her with a love of the

marvellous, as to render her inattentive to common scandal. No one, however, ventures to speak to her of her own story; she never alludes to it herself, and seems anxious that it should be forgotten. The curiosities have all been removed from the attics; the skeletons having taken up their quarters at an aspiring surgeon's, who, forgetful that death's-heads would scare patients from the door, has placed them in an apartment, which, in consequence of some rumours of resurrection men, has already obtained a very bad name. No doubt, a great many stories could be told about the room, and it is questionable whether the owner could maintain his ground so well, were it not for a singularly handsome junior partner, lately added to the establishment, who condescends to dispense medicines in the shop himself, with his own white hands, and has carried away all the custom for lavender water from the perfumers, the young ladies becoming patronesses to a great extent.



## A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS.

BY A LAME GENTLEMAN.

SOME months since I blended pleasure with business, and took a trip to Louisville. After spending three or four days in that hospitable city, most delightfully, I embarked on board the steamboat *Mary*—I use a fictitious name, and, like the lord of poets, "I have a passion for the name of *Mary*,"—to return to Cincinnati. All was bustle on board—the captain was hurrying to and fro among the hands, uttering very strange oaths, and vowing that he must be off before the other boats.

Ah! a race on the carpet—or, to speak without metaphor, on the river—thought I, and as one on crutches, unless he has certain powers possessed by the devil on two sticks, which for his soul's sake he had better not have, unless he has the gift of Asmodeus, if any accident happens, is in just as bad a predicament as the liveliest imagination, expatiating on our western waters, could possibly fancy. I cannot swim, thought I—it will be a tempting of misfortune—I'll quit the boat. I passed out of the cabin to carry this resolution into effect, and beheld the firemen pitching the huge logs into the furnace as though they were so many Lilliputian splinters. The heat from the apparatus passed over my face like the breath of the sirocco. At this instant the steam gave a hiss full of fuming fury—it seemed to me the premonitory symptom of a bursted boiler, just as the hiss of a snake is the avant courier of a bite. I could not pass that boiler—it was impossible. While I stood eyeing it—irresolute—I heard the paddles splash in the water, and the boat moved under me—we were on our way. I now hurried into the cabin, determined to get the sternmost berth, number one—the farthest off from the boiler—and ensconce myself in it until supper, and then I could just pop out and take the nearest seat at the table.

When I opened the book to set my name down to number one, lo! every berth was taken but number ten, the nearest of all to the boiler.

"There must be some mistake about this," said I, aloud; "I believe I took number one."

"No mistake at all, sir," exclaimed a thin, dyspeptic old man, starting up from a chair which stood jam against the door that led to the stern of the boat; "no mistake at all, sir; I came three hours ago and took the berth—I have no idea of being near that boiler! Did you see that account in the paper this morning of the bursting of the boiler of the *Return*? Horrible! horrible!!"

Here the conversation among the passengers turned upon such accidents, and we talked ourselves into a perfect fever. Every jar of the boat—and somehow the boats on the western waters have a knack at jarring—seemed to be the last effort of the boiler to contain the boiling waters within. I tried to philosophise; I began to think about Napoleon, and to reason myself into a belief of destiny. I always was something of a predestinarian. "But confound it!" thought I, just as I was settling down into a fatalism as doubtless as a Mussulman, "if I had quitted this boat, or even got berth number one, it would certainly influence my destiny should that boiler burst."

I determined to try once more to get the berth, and I addressed the old codger again; but in vain. He vowed he would leave the boat, be put ashore, before he would give up number one. He discovered, had never been out of sight of his own chimney before, and had often sat in its snug corner, and read of steamboat accidents. He had a decided taste for such things. A connexion near Wheeling had left him a piece of property, of which



he was going to take possession, and, I verily believe, the price of it could not have induced him to change berths with me.

Habit is everything. By the time I had despatched more cups of coffee than I choose to tell of, and more eggs and bacon than might, under other circumstances, have been compatible with the health of a dyspeptic, for such I was, and seated myself on the stern of the vessel, with a fragrant cigar, watching the setting sun as it threw a gorgeous hue on the glittering waters—by this time, by a process of ratiocination with which, I fear, the sensual had more to do than the intellectual man, I had partly reconciled myself to the dangers that encompassed me.

I discovered that the other boats were out of sight, and I began to reflect that every situation has its pleasures, as well as perils. And there arose, vividly to my mind, the fact that when, not a very long time previous, I was approaching Dayton, through the woods, in a carryall, all alone by myself, as an Irishman would say, with a greater desire for a straight course than the trees would allow me to practise—the fore-wheel of my vehicle—I was in full trot—quarrelled with a tree that stood in its way, got the worst of it, and broke short off. Its trotter behind took up the quarrel like a true brother, and the consequence was, I was pitched out into the road with much less ceremony than a carter unloads his cart. My better half, my crutch, kept its seat and bounced up, I thought with a spirit of rejoicing and devilry, delighted, no doubt, to get rid of a burden that I had compelled it to carry for years—a burden which, unlike *Æsop's*, grew heavier on the journey. Crutch and I have never been friends since. In taking a long walk, after this event, it bruised my arm so terribly, that I have been an invalid for five months. This infused into my arm a spirit of nub-tuation. It ran up the single star, at once, and vowed it would not

bear the weight of the whole body—that it was not made for that purpose, and wouldn't and couldn't. I had several times threatened this unruly member with dismemberment, but it knows very well it is bruised too near the shoulder for *that*, and is like South Carolina, too close a part and parcel of my body to entertain many fears on that score. In fact, I played politician with it and brought in a compromise till I have agreed not to use the crutch until my arm gets well, and to endeavour to contrive some other means of walking. For amusement, and to get rid of ennui, in the mean time, I scribble. But, where was I in my story? Ah! away went the horse with the broken carryall, my crutch driving, while I lay in the road, happily unhurt, but, like King Darius, “deserted in my utmost need.” In an instant I recovered myself, and called out “wo! wo!” in the most commanding tone I could assume. The horse stopped, but, you may depend, I had a hop of it to reach him.

Some one of old boasted to one of the philosophers—which one was it? I forget,—that he could stand longer on one leg than any man in the country:—“That you may,” replied the philosopher, “but a goose can beat you.” Now, the fact is, I can beat the best goose of the whole of them: and this is something to brag of, when we remember that these sublime birds saved the now “lone mother of dead empires,” then in her high and palmy state, by cackling. A good many cackle now-a-days in vain, to save our state; but, gentle reader, they are not geese. And, my fellow-citizens, if you think I have any qualities for saving the state—which our statesmen want, though even geese had them of old, but they were *Roman* geese, and the last of the Romans, both of geese and men, rests in peace—if you think I have any qualities for saving the state, be it known to you, that I have adopted the motto of various elevated, disinte-



rested patriots of our country, viz.—“neither to seek nor decline office.” I have a right to jest with my misfortunes,—it is the best way to bear them.

I had to lead my old horse up to the broken carryall to mount him. He feared to look on what he had done, like Macbeth; and the ghost of Banquo never startled the thane more, than did the ghost of a vehicle my steed. How he curvetted, twisted, turned, kicked up! At last I mounted him, and shared, with my crutch and the harness, the honour of a ride into Dayton.

In this way I entered that town for the first time, and drew up at Browning's in a state of grotesque dignity, I ween, that has seldom been surpassed.

I chewed the cud of this incident for some time, and then thought of another. The winter before last, I was returning from Columbus in the mail-stage. We had passengers,—a reverend gentleman, who, with myself, occupied the front seat. He was one of the biggest parsons you ever saw. Opposite to the reverend gentleman sat a Daniel Lambert of a Pennsylvanian,—one of your corn-fed fellows. He believed emphatically that Major Jack Downing was as true-and-true a man as ever wrote a letter, and his political bias led him to remark, that “he didn't think the major was any great shakes after all.” Alongside of the Pennsylvanian, face to face with your humble servant, was a young man with demure features, saving and excepting a twinkling eye. He was a southerner, he said, travelling for his health. On the back seat sat an old and a young lady, with an elderly respectable-looking man between them. The young lady was like a dream of poetry: her features were finely formed, and her eyes were the most expressive and intelligent I ever beheld. She mechanically—from the impulse of good feeling—stretched out her hand to take my crutch, as I ascended the steps of the stage; and, remembering Dr. Franklin's tale of the deformed and handsome

leg,—I often have cause to remember it, and I promised it a test,—I felt an instinctive admiration for the fair lady.

We were soon dashing along, not on the best roads in the world. I like to observe character; I'd shut Shakspeare any day, and turn a deaf ear to Booth any night, though representing his best character, to hold converse with an original in the lobby. I sat in silence, and listened to the talk of my travelling companions for a mile or two, when I made up my mind as to their characters. My mind was made up from the first as to the fair lady. In coming to a fine prospect, I caught her eye glancing over it, and I commenced gently to expatiate upon it. I made a hit—I thought I would. We broke out at once into a cantering conversation, in which our imaginations sported and played on the beauties of the poets and of Dame Nature. I tried to find out who she was, but you must remember I had to deport myself with great delicacy and tact—she was an accomplished, young, and most beautiful woman, and I was merely a stage-coach acquaintance, without not only the pleasure of an introduction, but ignorant of her name. These parsons beat us young men out and out; for, when we stopped to dine, the reverend gentlemen took a seat by the fair lady, in the corner on the left-hand side of the fireplace; and they carried on a conversation, in a low voice, for some time. I began to form a bad opinion of the whole tribe of black coats, and to think them no better than “*the gentleman in black*, with a black waistcoat, inexpressibles, and silk stockings, black coat, black bag, black-edged papers tied with black tape, black smelling-bottle, and snuff-box, and blackguard,” whose adventures have somewhere been published. Well, thought I, if I were an old limb of the law, instead of a young one, I might play old Bagsby with him, but I am not, and—. I was interrupted agreeably in these reflections by the reverend gentleman,



or the "gentleman in black," leaving the fair lady, and walking to the other side of the room to the fireplace,—for there was a fireplace in both ends of the room,—and commencing a conversation with the elderly gentleman and lady seated there. I was left *tête-à-tête* with the fair lady, and divers and sundry things were said by both of us not necessary to record. How fast the time flew! I felt a cold chill as the driver entered the room. We arose; he said "he was sorry to have kept us so long, but he was having the wheels of the stage greased, the former driver had neglected it, and his horses couldn't stand it." "So long!"—I sat down—you know my feelings—and I hoped, and hope, my fair companion did not regret a great deal the delay.

Long ere this, of course, I had discovered the lady was as intelligent as she was beautiful, and I offered her a newspaper I had put in my pocket at Columbus, that I might read for the third time a beautiful tale which it contained. The editor of the paper praised the story very highly, and I commended his taste and the public's.

"What is the name of the tale?" asked the lady.

"'Constancy,'" said I: "I fear it is but a day-dream—but the story is beautifully told—and I hope the author, if ever he has a love affair, may realise it"

She blushed, and asked me to read it. I pride myself somewhat upon my reading—I had a motive, you see for offering the newspaper,—and in a voice just loud enough for her to hear, I complied.

We were soon seated in the stage again, rattling away. The Pennsylvanian had eaten to sleepiness; he nodded and nodded fore and aft. The young man beside him, with a face as grave as the parson's, would every now and then slily tip his hat, so as sometimes to cant it nearly off; at which the unsuspecting sleeper would rouse up, replace his beaver, cast his eye to the top of the stage, as if he wondered if a bounce of the vehicle

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could have pitched him so high and then nod again.

We changed horses at the Yellow Springs, still keeping up a brisk fire of conversation. I did my best to beat the preacher; but these preachers are bad men to deal with,—they stand on a place Archimedes wanted; for while I was musing upon some fairy thought the fair lady had uttered, the reverend gentleman, or "the gentleman in black," took advantage of the pause, and proposed that we should sing a hymn! I have no voice in the world—I mean for singing, and, with a jaundiced mind, I thought at once the reverend gentleman wished to show off. I asked him rather abruptly if he was married! he smiled peculiarly—I didn't like his smile—moved his head—I couldn't tell whether it was a shake or nod, and gave out the hymn.

Just as you pass the Yellow Springs, on your way to Cincinnati, is a branch, which, at this particular time to which I allude, was very muddy. We descended into it in full drive—the ladies and the parson in full voice—and sweetly sounded the fair lady's. I was watching her upturned eye, that had the soul of the hymn in it, when the fore-wheel on my side entered a mud-hole up to the hub, and over went the stage! Were there bones broken? you ask. Bones broken! I would have compromised the case, and used a dozen crutches. We had a verification of Dean Swift's proverb,—it gave consolation to him to whom the dean addressed it, but none to me:

"The more dirt,  
The less hurt."

The big parson fell right on me! Do you wonder that I felt myself sinking into the mud? I seized time, as I was rapidly disappearing, as I thought altogether, to ask the fair lady if she was hurt? She was not, she assured me, and, in a plaintive voice, inquired if I was. There is consolation, thought I, in that tone, if I should sink to the centre of the earth; and when I reflected

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how muddy I was, I contracted myself into as small a compass as possible, determined to disappear. Here the Virginian called out, in a long, angry voice, which satisfied us that he was not killed, though he felt himself in danger—

"Halloo, Pennsylvania! are you never going to get off of me?"

The sleeper was not yet fairly awake.

"Don't swear!—don't swear!" said the preacher, persuasively; and, making a stepping-stone of my frail body, he got through the window. The Pennsylvanian used the body of his neighbour for the same purpose—engulfed him—and followed after the parson. The fair lady was unhurt, and (not to be too particular) we all got safely out. And—and, no matter—it's no use for a man to make himself too ridiculous—I shall not commit a suicide on my own dignity—I forgot my situation but for a moment, and that was in observing the parson by the roadside on his knees, with his clasped hands uplifted, and his hat reverently cast aside. I forgot my situation but for that one moment, and in that one moment my opinion of the parson was entirely changed.

The stage was uninjured; in ten minutes we were on our way. I—I—I can jest with some of my misfortunes—my crutch; but there are some misfortunes a man can't jest with.

In about half an hour, the stage stopped at a neat farm-house, and the fair lady, with her companions, left us, but not before I seized an opportunity of uttering, notwithstanding my discomfiture, in my very best manner, one or two compliments that had more heart in them than many I have uttered to many a fair acquaintance of many years' standing.

When we were on our way again, I learned from the parson that (he had caught it all between the two fireplaces where we had stopped to

dine—it gave me serious notions of reading divinity) the fair lady was travelling under the protection of the old lady and gentleman, who were distantly connected with her. She was on her way home from boarding-school in Philadelphia; she had stopped at a relative's. Her parents lived at — (a great distance, thought I). She was the authoress, he told me, of "Constancy."

Not long after this little event, I received a newspaper, the direction—my address in full—written in a fair, delicate hand (a hand meant for a "crowquill and gilt-edged paper,") containing a beautiful story "by the authoress of 'Constancy.'" I didn't think it possible for my name to look as well as it did in that direction.

Whenever I travel—and often, often when I don't travel, and am an invalid, as now—that fair lady is the queen of my imagination; but a cloud always passed over my face (I've looked into the glass and seen it), and another over my heart (I feel it now), whenever I think of the branch by the Yellow Springs. Yet in spite of the upturning, even on board of the boat, in the fear of a boiler's bursting, when her image crossed my mind, gone were the dangers around me. The smoke ascended from my cigar, not in a puff, like the steam from the boiler, but soothingly, lingeringly, placidly: it curled above my head like a dream of love. I fixed my eye on the rapidly-varying landscape, and renewed a vow I have often made (and I always keep my vows), that if—bah! your "if" is a complete weathercock of a word—a perfect parasite to your hopes and to your fears—used by all, faithful to none—a sycophant, but I must use it;—if I ever—no matter, if it turns up as I hope—I'll make a pilgrimage to the shrine of that fair lady, though I go to the uttermost parts of the earth.



## CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

WHEN Columbus first meditated his voyage of discovery, the European mind dwelt habitually within a narrow circumscription of locality. When he sailed, no opinion had ever yet crossed the dark horizon which separated the Great Western Hemisphere from the Old World. How the idea first took possession of his mind, and seized upon him like a passion—how for it he endured rebuffs, persecutions—was laughed at as a fool, an idiot, and a madman—how he still persisted, entreated, argued, and at length convinced “the powers that be” of the feasibility of his scheme: all this is full of interest, and of deep meaning. It looks very like a working of Providence, raising up at the time its chosen instrument to carry on the great work of human advancement and civilisation.

As early as 1474, the idea had acquired consistency in his mind. He wrote to a learned friend at Florence, Paulo Toscanelli, detailing his theory, and he was encouraged by him to prosecute his attempt. The navigator persevered in his studies, and accumulated probabilities in favour of his enterprise. But he was poor, and could do nothing without the aid of powerful friends, whom he therefore sought to secure.

About this time, his wife died, and he was plunged into deep sorrow. His affairs were also getting into confusion, and he feared being arrested for debt; so he left Lisbon, and went to Genoa, where he applied to the Republic for aid in his enterprise; but his application was contemptuously rejected.

He landed in Spain, at the little town of Palos, in Seville, quite destitute. He had his little boy with him, and proceeded to beg his way into the interior of the country. As the monastic houses of that day were the invariable resort of the

poor, Columbus called at the monastery of Santa Maria de Rabida, a few miles from Palos, and begged a little bread and water for his child. This was given him; and, meanwhile, the prior of the monastery, Juan Perez de Marchena, passed, and was struck by the appearance of the wanderer. He entered in conversation with him, and soon learnt his history. The prior was a man of enlarged knowledge, and entered eagerly into the project. He detained Columbus as his guest, and sent for a physician, a learned man, from Palos, to confer with him on the subject. The mariners of Palos were also consulted, and at length Columbus found willing and believing listeners.

The issue of the conferences with the prior and his friends was, that Columbus was furnished with a letter to the Queen's confessor, then at Cordova. He met with no success, and quitted the court, quite hopeless of any result, and again wandered about Spain for nearly seven years, seeking help from the great and powerful, but in vain.

At last, one Martin Alonso Pinzon, the head of a family famous for their adventures by sea, fitted out a ship, and offered to sail in the expedition with his brother (like him, a skilful navigator). Others were induced to follow the example, and three ships lay in the port of Huelva, ready to launch upon the unfathomable sea which spread towards the west. After making a solemn public procession to the convent of Rabida, and receiving the religious blessing of good father Perez, the little fleet set out. The voyage was made in alternate calms, gales, breezes, and tempests. All Columbus's art was needed to allay the forebodings and still the fears of the mariners. He stimulated their hopes, by pointing to the wealth which lay before them, and the thirst for gold drew



them on. The compass no longer pointed steadily to the north: nature's laws seemed altered; the mysterious guides of heaven no longer attended them. Large patches of weeds floated by as they sailed westward; tropical birds winged about them, and tunny fish sported around their vessels. Singing-birds from the land at last flew over their heads, and now their hopes rose, and they looked eagerly into the western horizon. A whale rolled its broad back above the waters, and the phenomenon proved a new source of alarm. The growing discontent among the crews seemed to forbode an open rebellion; knots of conspirators clustered on the decks, and it was meditated to cast the author of their perils into the sea. Still he hoped on. "Land" was shouted; but the clouds melted away, and the water-line of the horizon lay before them still. Again they steered westward, the dolphins leaping about in the glassy sea. "Land" was cried again and again, but the wish was father to the thought, and still the land appeared not. The ship's course was altered, and they sailed southwest.

Hope was well-nigh worn out, when "fresh weeds floated by; a fish, known to inhabit only rocky waters, swam around; a branch of thorn, covered with berries, tossed before them, and they picked up a reed, a small board, and a carved

staff. Again expectation stood tip-toe on the prow, and the three vessels went gaily on, steered by Hope, with joyful hearts on board. Away westward they kept their slackening course. An unremitting watch was maintained on board. The day closed, the sun set, and night fell. Columbus, from the lofty poop, stretched his gaze towards the horizon, now growing dim in the thickening light. At ten o'clock a glimmer, as of a distant beacon, seemed to shine in the west; he called one of the company, asking him if he saw a light in that direction. He said 'yes.' But Columbus, unwilling to delude himself with a fancy, called another, who mounted the roundhouse, but the appearance had vanished. It soon shone out again, like a torch in the sea-tossed bark of a fisherman, or a light carried to and fro in a forest. Slight as was this sign of hope, Columbus rested on it with sanguine expectation. Morning brought the blessed fulfilment. A gun, fired from the *Pinta*, carried on its flash the confirmation of their hopes—the intelligence that land was seen. Rodrigo de Griana first saw it. The new world was discovered, and the navigator's long life of uneasiness, toil, and disappointment, was crowned with success—success, which opened to the nations of civilised Europe rich, unbounded, and exhaustless fields of enterprise."



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